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THOMAS CARLYLE

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THOMAS CARLYLE

by

MARY AGNES HAMILTON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY PROFESSOR H. J. C. GRIERSON



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THOMAS CARLYLE

INTRODUCTION

MRS. HAMILTON has written a very timely book on Carlyle, the best book on one aspect of his work that I have ever read; for Carlyle has suffered a most unmerited eclipse of late years, though in these very years, as she shows, his words have acquired a new significance, a startling verification. 'The English people,' says Professor Denis Saurat, 'must have a Grand Old Man.' As a notable statesman or poet or preacher or novelist approaches the end of his career a tube is inserted, metaphorically speaking, in his structure, and he is blown up to prodigious proportions, to be followed only too quickly by a melancholy wilting. Such within the present writer's memory has been the fate of Carlyle, Browning, Tennyson, George Meredith—and who can doubt that Thomas Hardy's reputation is passing through the same cycle. Nay, Robert Bridges, it has been discovered, has produced at the age of eighty-four his *magnum opus*, a poem comparable to Wordsworth's *Prelude*! To-day a God—to-morrow 'none so poor to do him reverence.'

The reaction against Carlyle began almost immediately after his death, stimulated by the publication of his *Reminiscences* and intensified by Froude's so readable yet distorting *Biography*

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(1882). The halo which had gathered round the head of the Sage of Chelsea was rent; and we got, almost before he was cold in his grave, a vivid but partial, one-sided picture of the real man; and two things showed him in a rather disagreeable light, not quite up to the popular conception of the prophet and sage — first, his rather ungenerous manner of speaking of his contemporaries; and second, the irritability of his temper which, Froude suggested, had made the life of Mrs. Carlyle a long martyrdom. The wife took the stage, Lady Macbeth beside the Thane, and all Carlyle's subsequent biographers have been his apologists or hers. The first fault is undeniable. That justice to which Carlyle always appealed has made his judgment on Keats and on Lamb a judgment upon himself; but even of friends Carlyle's manner of speaking is rather trying — 'poor Mill,' 'poor Mazzini,' though one must recall that in Scotland 'poor' is an epithet of endearment. But on all this I will leave Mrs. Hamilton to speak, content to express my conviction that in that 'long run' to which Carlyle entrusted the cause of truth and justice he will have reason to be grateful to the maligned Froude. Better a vivid and truthful, even if partial, picture of a real man than such a whited mausoleum as the late Lord Tennyson erected to the memory of his

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great sire. If in the Valhalla of the Blessed Carlyle smokes the pipe of peace with Froude and Jane, he has doubtless often smiled at the storm that has raged, and has left his reputation as a man to justice and the 'long run.'

What may have disturbed him more, but in the end probably evoked a louder peal of laughter, is the complacent judgment of later critics that he was certainly a great man of letters but no thinker, no philosopher, no prophet. That was the finding of the editor of the Centenary Edition of 1896, the late H. D. Traill, an edition which might be described as 'The Works of Professor Teufelsdröckh, edited by Hofrath Heuschrecke.' For him Carlyle was 'a philosopher without a philosophy,' 'a prophet whose prophecies are of little account,' 'neither prophet nor doctor'; 'It is with some unwillingness that we pass from this picturesque and romantic episode' (the first part of *Past and Present*) 'to the two concluding books and find ourselves at hand-grips with professors of the dismal science, commercial capitalists, *laissez-faire* economists, Plugson of Undershot, Sir Jabez Windbag and the rest of Carlyle's bogies. They are all fallen silent—all gone dead to-day'—surely an amazing blindness for even 1896, and those years of commercial prosperity which followed each other till 1913—years of

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prosperity in which nevertheless twelve millions of the population (so Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman) were living on the verge of subsistence and rearing that C3 population which the recruiting for the army revealed. For the vindication of Carlyle as a social Seer and Prophet has not had to wait for so very long a run after all. We *have* shot Niagara, we *are* in the rapids, and whether these are to lead to the sudden calm that succeeds the tumult in that river or to shoot another Niagara is still known only to God. Mrs. Hamilton's star of Hope is the Labour Party, and it is always well to hope: 'I bid you *hope*,' as Carlyle, following Goethe, reiterates.

It is this startling vindication of Carlyle as a social prophet, as one who saw whither things were tending whether early or late, and in *Past and Present* Carlyle expressly indicates that he did *not* expect any immediate or early fulfilment of his fears, it is this which is the theme of Mrs. Hamilton's interesting study. I would only add one word on what seems to me the inherent fallacy in all this talk of Carlyle's failure to produce a 'coherent body of doctrine.' What has become of all the coherent bodies of doctrine metaphysical and ethical from the days of Plato to those of Hegel—the deduction of all the ideas from the Idea of Good, 'the hocus-pocus of mathematical

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form by means of which Spinoza . . . clad his philosophy in mail and mask'; the schematisation of the categories? In the abstract sphere in which science moves there is room for systematic, logical thinking, deductions from hypotheses, which can in the end be tested by experience, pragmatically. In the more concrete realm of metaphysics and ethics the more systematic the thinking the less sure the touch it will maintain with reality. 'It has gradually become clear to me what every great philosophy up till now has consisted of—namely, the confession of the originator, a species of involuntary and unconscious auto-biography; and, moreover, that the moral (or immoral) purpose in every philosophy has constituted the true vital germ out of which the entire plant has always grown.' (*Nietzsche.*) It is not by system and logic that the Seer purifies, enlarges, and deepens men's vision, but by the record of his own intellectual and imaginative reaction to the complex of experience.

Sartor Resartus—that wonderful prose poem—is such an autobiography issuing in a philosophy as Nietzsche indicates, but it is not a systematic theory of 'man's relation to the external world' or the problems of his origin and destiny. It is a statement of the conviction reached by Carlyle through experience, feeling, imagination and thought, of

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the spiritual nature of the universe, and the real values of life in contrast to the specious values of which his age was so complacently confident. It is no new systematic explanation of the universe which the prophet has ever given to man, but a fresh sense of its mysterious character, a quickened sense of its ultimate values. This, Mrs. Hamilton reminds us, is just what Carlyle did. Scientific materialism, systematic utilitarian ethics (see the *Methods of Ethics*), systematic *laissez-faire* economics (see Ricardo) — all these watchwords of the century were to the seeing eye of Carlyle idols, illusions — yes, Liberty and Democracy too; ‘Liberty, I am told, is a divine thing. Liberty, when it becomes the Liberty to die by starvation is not so divine. . . . Liberty requires new definitions.’ . . . ‘Democracy, which means despair of finding any heroes to govern you, and contentedly putting up with the want of them — alas! . . . how close akin it is to Atheism and other sad *isms*.’ And now that the din and dust of the party politics of last century — Much Ado About Nothing — have cleared away, now that we have shot the first cataract and are face to face with the grim facts of our social and economic life, when we are increasing our debt annually by twenty-five millions in supporting those who cannot, yes, and among them those who do not wish to, get work, it

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becomes evident enough that Carlyle was right and *not* the systematic philosophers, the systematic economists, the systematic utilitarians and the party-programme politicians. The evils which he indicated were *not* bogies which have silently vanished away, as it seemed to Mr. Traill in 1896. They were very real evils of which we are reaping the fruits. Liberty? Look at Russia and Italy. Democracy? Contemplate China and India. No, it was the philosophies and economics that were bogies and have vanished leaving something of a bad odour behind. The remedies which Carlyle pleaded for were *not* the dreams of an unpractical thinker and man of letters—the organisation of industry (we call it ‘rationalisation’ now and are undertaking it too much in the old inhuman, mechanical way); permanence of contract—in a word justice in our human relations and no mere ‘cash-nexus’—we are having now to endeavour after these things under the influence of necessity and fear, which Carlyle would have had us take in hand while we had the means and the leisure, and done so inspired by goodwill, by faith, faith in the justice which lies at the heart of things however mysterious their working may seem: ‘The universe, I say, is made by Law; the great Soul of the World is just and not unjust.’ No, Carlyle was not a systematic theory-and-constitution-monger, but

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he was a Seer. He saw nature as Wordsworth saw it, but with a clearer perception of its darker, its 'spectral' side; and he saw the common people as Wordsworth did, but his eye was less fixed on the idyllic, more on the hardships, the injustice of their lot, the 'spectral' character of man's life, too. And Carlyle was a poet. Lord Morley dismissed his style as eccentric and wanting in the classical form which gives permanence. Well, we can see now that there are paragraphs in Carlyle's prose which, just as literature, one would not give in exchange for, just as literature, all that Morley ever wrote, and I should like to add to those Mrs. Hamilton has cited in her last chapter just one more, not from any great work, but from a simple letter to Jane Welsh: 'I will shew you Kirkconnell churchyard and Fair Helen's grave. I will take you to the top of Burnswark and wander with you up and down the woods and lanes and moors. Earth, sea and air are open to us here as well as anywhere. The Water of Milk was flowing through its simple valley as early as the brook Siloa, and poor Repentance Hill is as old as Caucasus itself. There is a majesty and mystery in Nature, take her as you will. The essence of all poetry comes breathing to a mind that feels from every province of her empire. Is she not immovable, eternal and immense in Annandale as

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she is in Chamouni? The chambers of the East are opened in every land, and the sun comes forth to sow the earth with orient pearl. Night, the ancient Mother, follows him with her diadem of stars; and Arcturus and Orion call *me* into the Infinitude of space as they called the Druid priest or the Shepherd of Chaldea. Bright creatures! how they gleam like spirits through the shadows of innumerable ages from their throne in the boundless depths of heaven.'

H. J. C. GRIERSON.

Edinburgh.

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CHAPTER I

ON THE THRESHOLD

‘The understanding is indeed thy window, too clear thou canst not make it; but Fantasy is thy eye, with its colour-giving retina, healthy or diseased.’

To anyone who has just re-read the writings of Thomas Carlyle, two words may well seem to sum up all that need be said: ‘Read him.’ In these two words, indeed, most effective literary criticism is comprised. If this small book has that result for its readers, its purpose is accomplished.

Why, in 1930, should Carlyle be read? For two main reasons. First, as he himself put it, ‘Great men, taken up in any way, are profitable company,’ and he is as great a man as any his country has produced, with a personality of beautiful and arresting definiteness of outline. Second, his work, admittedly literature, contains stuff of much interest and import for us; more, indeed, for us, even than for the generation to whom it was addressed. We are in a muddle, uncertain what we think, on nearly every issue of our lives — religion, politics, personal relations. The more we

learn as to the 'how' of things, the less we seem to know about their 'why.' He was not always right, but he was nearly always certain, and when he had a view, he knew where it came from, and what it was for. For us, knowledge has overwhelmed vision. His vision, once achieved, never wavered or failed.

On the greatness of the man, as on the relevance of his work, agreement, if granted, will be perfunctory to-day. Because he is not read. Controversy about him has died down, but died, in spite of the faithful labours of Charles Eliot Norton, Alexander Carlyle, David Alec Wilson, and others, from inanition rather than from conviction. He has passed into the twilight of the nineteenth century. No region could fit him worse. In the blackness of night or the white glare of noonday his vivid being might find a home, not among the mists. Yet it is there he dwells at the moment: a vague memory of youthful inspiration and later disappointment to the elderly, a word of dubious association to the young. In those who read him a long time ago his name stirs dim disquietude—did he not become a shrill-voiced reactionary in old age? Was not a brilliant wife sacrificed to his dyspeptic humours? Is not his style rocky and cacophonous? Those urged to read him now murmur that he is

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out of date: the admiration of their ageing relatives is, for them, not encouragement.

Out of date Carlyle is not. Actually he is nearer to the mind of to-day than he was to that of the age in which he wrote. Both what he has to say and the man himself are tuned to our twentieth-century pitch, rather than to that of the nineteenth. In origin and in idea he belongs to the now awakening world of labour. He is concerned with its problems, spiritual as well as economic and, to a degree hardly realised, voices its spirit. This is a bold statement, liable to challenge. Does not Professor Graham Wallas, in his latest book, suggest that 'if a school supported from public funds helped a Thomas Carlyle towards self-expression, it might be attacked by the Labour Party as a home of reaction'? It might be attacked; but the attack would be blind and unjustified — so it is hoped to show in what follows.

His speech is nearer to ours than to that of the mid-Victorians. In the broken staccato of its rhythm, as well as in many of its words and tunes, it anticipates the medium of the modern novel. Some of the faults of that form it also shows. But its vitality is irresistible; it never misses fire, or spends itself in air. It finds the centre, and it is our centre. No one who happened, during the

summer of 1926, to read *Past and Present*, can but have winced under its painful aptness. Is it possible that we leave Carlyle alone because, if read, he would trouble and disturb us? because his anticipation would prevent our discovery? A re-reading of his volumes in the light of modern happenings suggests that this may be.

Before approaching them, however, something must be said of the man himself. Carlyle did not desire to have his biography written. 'The chief elements in my little destiny have all along lain deep below view or surmise and never can or will be known to any son of Adam.' Nevertheless, before his death, James Anthony Froude had begun to compose it, and by 1884 his four bulky volumes had appeared. These four volumes compel one to preface a study of the books in which Carlyle has, in effect, though not in intention, told his own story, by a brief survey of the facts of his life. Froude gave a picture of the man he thought he admired as dismal as it is perverse. He reared his super-structure on a misquotation. Carlyle's mother said her son was 'gey ill to deal wi'.' Froude, with characteristic inaccuracy, reported this as 'gey ill to live wi' '—a phrase that runs like a refrain through his volumes. From his pages Carlyle emerges as an ill-tempered Jeremiah, great in public, but intolerable in private life.

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Intolerable to many people he doubtless was and always will be, but not in Froude's way. Froude not only mishandled his evidence; he left out two factors, both essential to understanding. Carlyle had an immense and pervading sense of humour and he was a Scot. Froude had little or no humour, and he was a Southron.

To see Carlyle one must get behind Froude. In that effort one may seek assistance in three directions—his portraits, the evidence of those who knew him, and the background out of which he came. Emerson, whose friendship with him lasted over five-and-thirty years, declared that the frontispiece of the present volume was, to his mind, the most satisfactory likeness. 'This head,' he wrote, 'is to me out of comparison more satisfying than any picture. I confirm my recollection and make new observations: it is life to life. Thanks to the sun. The artist remembers what every other forgets to report, and what I wish to know, the true sculpture of the features, the angles, the special organism, the rooting of the hair, the form and placing of the head.' In his Diary, he notes especially, 'the eye, full of England, the valid eye, in which I see the strong executive talent which has made his thought available to the nations, whilst others as intellectual as he are pale and powerless.'

The photograph shows Carlyle at fifty: that is, at the height of his powers and in the ripe prime of his manhood. He lived beyond eighty, to be a Sage, but this is the creative Carlyle. Too many of the familiar heads—notably Whistler's superb design—depict him old, sad, bearded. Watts painted him at seventy-three; Whistler a year before his death. The power of the jutting brow, the magnificent structure of the head, the deep gaze of the eyes, which kept their blue to the last, though their flashing violet faded, are there, and the quality of his aspect, noted by Alexander Smith in 1866 as of 'something aboriginal, as of a piece of unhewn granite, never polished to the approved pattern'; but the beard, not acquired till 1854, when he was entering his sixties, masks the force and drive of the chin, and hides the mouth, most significant feature always in the adult face, since a man makes it for himself. Of Carlyle's ruling traits, the bearded, elder portraits show the faithfulness, the fundamental veracity, and the brooding melancholy; they miss, while this younger one reports, the force, the courage and the creative strength. It gives, too, the patience—not of resignation, but of a bow tautly drawn, with arrow fairly fixed and aim most searchingly apprehended: a patience that has something grim in it, but also something tender.

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It is not an easy head. Here, too, the photograph is truthful. Henry James somewhere divides men and women into those who take life hard and those who take it easy. Carlyle took life hard, and had small use for those who took it easy. Neither in literature nor in life can he care for them. 'Woe to them who are at ease in Zion' was one of his favourite sayings.

Mainly for this reason he rejected Plato—'a gentleman very much at ease in Zion'; was inadequate in his appreciation of Scott, blind to Keats, and intolerant to Charles Lamb, when he could forgive darker failings in Robert Burns, Oliver Cromwell, Luther, Mirabeau, or Frederick of Prussia. Existence was, for him, a tense struggle between the powers of light and darkness, its issue too precarious for tolerance of the indifferent. In a passage, often misquoted, he has drawn a picture of 'the gifted ones' entirely applicable to himself, which explains why he makes many people uneasy:

'Not a May game is this man's life; but a battle and a march, a warfare with principalities and powers. No idle promenade through fragrant orange-groves and green flowery spaces waited on by the choral Muses and the rosy Hours: it is a stern pilgrimage through

burning sandy solitudes, through regions of thick-ribbed ice. He walks among men; loves men with inexpressible soft pity—as they *cannot* love him: but his soul dwells in solitude, in the uttermost parts of creation. In green oases by the palm-tree wells, he rests a space; but anon he has to journey forward, escorted by the Terrors and the Splendours, the Arch demons and the Archangels. All Heaven, all Pandemonium are his escort. The stars, keen-glancing from the Immensities, send tidings to him; the graves, silent with their dead, from the Eternities. Deep calls for him unto Deep.’

Here is the essential Carlyle—stern, with the tenderness of strength, loving others more than they can love him, solitary and rather alarming because of that. Always there will be this difficulty in writing of him that he is a man about whom it is impossible to feel moderately. To-day, as at the time, contact with him sends up the temperature. It is possible to dislike and find him a nuisance; possible to love him, ‘honour his memory, this side idolatry, as much as any’; but hardly possible to clear attraction or repulsion out of the estimate. If he finds the vein of secret passion, it quivers in response to his touch as to that of few others: stirs with an exciting pleasure,

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or aches with a pain like toothache. It was so, in his time. Aside from a public reverence which left him sincerely unaffected, because he cared infinitely more for the thing he was trying to say than for applause in the effort, he was regarded with an almost worshipping affection by many. Those, however, who could not recognise his mastery angrily resisted and resented it, because they found both the man and his ideas overpowering, nay, suffocating. He was, as Jeffrey said, dreadfully in earnest. He oppressed those who agreed with La Rochefoucauld that '*Nous avons tous assez de force pour supporter les maux d'autrui.*' They felt it as a reproach that he was unable to bear the ills of others. Men could have endured his complaining of his own: his disinterested agony disquieted and annoyed. Nor was disquiet mitigated by the Homeric laughter in which his sense of tragedy found relief.

True, his laughter finds no place in his Journal. In whose journal does it? Some echo of it, however, is held in his letters, and it resounds from the recollections of those who knew him. Overflowing humour was the first trait in him that struck men as different as Emerson, Robert Browning, Frederic Harrison, Charles Gavan Duffy and David Masson. Without his glorious laugh he was unthinkable to them. Thanks to it

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he was the best of good company. For the vain he perhaps talked too much; but what talk it was! Frederic Harrison says:

‘He rolled forth Latter Day Pamphlets by the hour together in the very words, with all the nicknames, expletives and ebullient hopes that were so familiar to us in print, with the full voice, the Dumfries burr and the kindling eye which all his friends recall. . . . I seemed to be already in the Elysian fields listening to the spirit rather than to the voice of the mighty *Sartor*. Could printed essay and spoken voice be so absolutely the same?’¹

He could listen, too, when a man had anything to say. In his latest years he did ‘harangue’ the visitors, American and other, who came to Cheyne Row to look at the ‘Sage of Chelsea,’ but with his friends he understood that conversation is an interchange, and there were many, like John Sterling, with whom he ‘did not differ, except in opinion.’ He listened, with an amazing patience, to John Sterling’s priggish criticism of his style, because he felt Sterling to be a ‘true man’ speaking from the heart.

Unless we are to use the ‘“clear” eyes (as they

¹ *Memories and Thoughts*. (1906.)

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call valet-eyes)' to which 'no man is a Hero, or ever was a Hero,' he is a Hero, a 'true man' if ever there was one; and it is worth while, before attempting to make out his message, to get a glimpse of that man and an insight into the heart from which he spoke.

CHAPTER II

SCOTLAND

‘There is no heroic poem in the world but is at bottom a biography, the life of a man.’

SOMETHING of his making Carlyle has written for us in *Sartor*: more in the *Reminiscences*, where, musing with loving pride over the great soul of his workman father, he calls up some of the ancestral ghosts that helped to mould him. To understand him one must go home; cross the Tweed, as Froude in spirit could not do, and feel the soil, the air, the memories among which he was born, grew to manhood, and in feeling never left. To the end he kept his ‘Annandale burr,’ and not in speech only. With differences Jane Welsh shared this inheritance, as no southerner quite could.

Annandale, with its grey roads, its low stone walls and austere stone houses sparsely set on the rim of wide fields that reach up the green foothills where sheep graze until the grass withers to moss and heather, is washed and swept by winds from sea and mountains. Its own air comes thrilling with memory: in the fields lies buried a history that goes back to the beginning of man’s struggle with nature and himself. The mountains, instead

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of confining, give an almost miraculous sweep and arch to the sky which rides, above, beyond them. Huge Criffel rises to the north-west; to the south stretch the pale waters of the Solway, now rushing in a turbid sea, now a mere film of silver over grey-gold sand, with countless birds skirling over the reeds and grasses of its shallow fringes; across it the Lake hills now rise in majestic outline, now vanish into the haze.

From Annan bridge, the frail structure which spans a river which, at full tide, is a sea, there is a view Carlyle declared hardly to be matched in Europe. As one watches it, sees the mountains change from light to dark, and the waters, at one moment clear blue glass, at the next become a wild and foaming cauldron under the sudden onslaught of wind and tide, one understands why he found it at times 'apocalyptic' and spectral. The Solway divides Scotland from England; east of it topography has set no border, though nature has: here is the 'Debatable Land' where, throughout generations, battle raged and bitter feud stored the fields with bones. Annan water, emptying itself into the Solway, rises far north among the Moffat hills, over which Carlyle walked when he made his student way to Edinburgh College. Among their cleughs he might have met James Hogg, the Etrick Shepherd, or held converse

with the ghosts of the proud Douglas, 'Rare' Willie, and those hot-blooded folk who still live in the Border Ballads. Of the land between, every inch of grass and heather, moor and moss-hag is historic. The willowherb that flaunts by the roadside in September might be the flower of the blood of the fighting men: the meadowsweet that drifts enchanted over the peat, and the bogcotton that stars the moss, the tears of their women for the lost 'flowers of the forest.' Once a great forest covered these grey-green slopes and Scotland 'still rustled shaggy and leafy.' Later, every fold of the hills sheltered men of passionate and bitter faith, who worshipped God under the rain and frost, hunted from place to place, but unyielding.

History has scored the face of the country with its deepest lines: suffering and endurance lie, like the native granite, under its coloured surface. Men bred here could not but have a long background as well as the 'long foreground' of the wide reach of field and sky.

Here men have ploughed and herded, prayed to their gods and slaughtered their enemies, from the beginning of recorded time. Dunscore Church, which Carlyle saw from Craigenputtock, goes back to the earliest days of Christian settlement; so does Repentance Tower, rising like a minatory finger from Hoddam Hill. No one

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knows who built Scots Dyke or the Catrail, standing beyond memory or record: here and there, the vague outlines of Roman camps remain stockaded. Ecclefechan, where in the dark days of early December, 1795, Thomas was born, is almost on the site of the battle of Brunanburgh. Over the moors and mosses swept the mighty rievers, unbroken in spirit to the last, though broken in fortune: here and there a ruined Peel tower, like that which holds the storied fragrance of Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow, recalls their softer hours; to Kirkconnel Lea Carlyle, in an early letter, offered to take Jane Welsh and 'show her the grave where lies Fair Helen.' He quotes to her the singular words of an old Borderer, full of his own spirit — 'What think ye o't, Jock? It's no the thinking o't, but the doing it and the deeing for't I think on.' On Solway Moss the last bright hopes of the 'diamond heart, unflawed and bright, the whole world's crowning Jewel,' Queen Mary, went down to ruin, and 'not one of them, of all that fought, grudged once one drop that fell.' In Moffatdale and Annandale the Covenanters worshipped, fought and died: intolerance precious to them as their faith. Carlyle's grandfather saw the Jacobites pass through Ecclefechan in the '45.

No atmosphere for sweet reasonableness in

this land, with unforgotten feuds, passionate feeling and unrelaxing energy throbbing beneath its long winters and short summers. A hidden vein of tense romance: work, hard and unremitting, filling the hours from sunrise to sundown on six days of the week: on the seventh, the rigorous silence and stillness of the Lord. Poverty of body, troublous energy of mind, a harsh and sappy humour, and unrelaxing work, make the surface. Underneath lie romance and passion, the colour of blood and tears. Hidden from the stranger, they are as unpredictable by him as the fire and laughter behind the native caution and pawky stinginess of small change in speech and action. There is no more misleading countryside than Dumfries. Glance at it from the train window, or as the car tears along the hard, straight metals of the Great North Road, and one suspects nothing. It looks laborious and orderly always, at times (especially when passing through the unadorned, inhospitable-looking villages) unprepossessing. To prepossess the stranger is not its interest or concern. Its folk will sit stark silent throughout a journey, until some spark falls. Then beneath the hewn granite one may feel the dangerous fire. Because it is so sure and swift it has to be bolted down: hence the grudging dryness of common interchange. But it is there: it

comes out at a touch on one of the great common chords—love, death, God—in a queerly moving speech freaked with poetry. When it comes out, the man is in the line of his forgotten forebears. No wonder Carlyle, born and bred here, could not escape from the brooding Past, or fail to feel the present but an ‘inconsiderable film’ between it and the Future. Here, the mind goes out on limitless adventure—and yet holds fast. Great argufying among these ‘hardy, endeavouring, considering’ Annan folk; hard and sharp argufying, too, not infrequently bursting into furious anger; an ironic realism, and, behind, a pervading sense of spiritual forces. Presbyterianism, Carlyle says, in his Essay on Scott, had a vast share in the forming of the ‘pride of all Scotsmen.’ And of himself. ‘A country where the entire people is, or even once has been, laid hold of, filled to the heart with an infinite religious idea, has “made a step from which it cannot retrograde.” Thought, conserving the sense that man is a denizen of a Universe, creature of Eternity, has penetrated to the remotest cottage, to the simplest heart.’

An ingenious person, when the author of the *French Revolution* and *Cromwell* had begun to be famous, worked out a family tree which gave him an illustrious pedigree in the commonly accepted sense. It created much mirth in Cheyne Row.

The pedigree of which he was proud was the long line of nameless workers behind his mason father and himself: men who had eaten bread in the sweat of their brows and accepted in its superb certainty the Puritan conviction that 'the Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.' Old Thomas Carlyle, his grandfather, was proud and poor; a fiery man, irascible and indomitable, constantly in brawls 'abhorrent' to his son James, Carlyle's father, whose rule was never to speak of any disagreeable that was past; 'an honest, vehement, adventurous but not an industrious man.' Cruel privations and a wretched education (or rather no education) were James's lot. Unlettered, with no knowledge of books beyond the Bible—not even of Burns, almost his contemporary in birth, who died the year after Thomas the younger was born—and no experience of the world outside the forty-mile circuit of his home, James Carlyle was nevertheless 'one of the most interesting men I have known. He was a man of perhaps the very largest natural endowment of any it has been my lot to converse with.' Self-restrained and of rock-like tenacity, a dark fire glowered in him. 'He was irascible, choleric and we all dreaded his wrath. Yet passion never mastered him; it rather inspired him with new vehemence of insight, and more piercing emphasis of wisdom.' This darkness of

temper walled him in from the expressed affection of his children and made him strange even to his wife. To her, the affection of her son went out freely: to her he could talk freely; hardly to his father, greatly as he admired him. By the teaching of nature alone this unlettered craftsman had gathered what his son, in the noble memorial he wrote on his death in 1832, called the great maxim of philosophy: 'That man was created to work, not to speculate or feel or dream.' That lesson was the rock on which Thomas's own life was built: in his bones he knew that man must work as well as wonder — and work in the fear and worship of God.

In 1793 James Carlyle, then a master mason, married, as his second wife, Margaret Aitken. Of his mother, the eldest of her eight children has left no express memorial: but his love and reverence breathe in every line he wrote to and of her. To the last he found his most perfect content in her company. Comparatively late in life she taught herself to write in order that she might communicate with him by letter. Her simple letters give the very accent of the deep trust and inalterable faith that made him say (*Journal*, 1833): 'I often look on my mother (nearly the only genuine believer I know of), with a kind of sacred admiration.' She perhaps gave him the key to Cromwell.

THOMAS CARLYLE

Mainhill, about two and a half miles out of Ecclefechan, where he was born on 4th December, 1795, is a three-roomed farmhouse, standing, as such Scottish houses do, right on the street. It was a poor home as material things go: his first thought, when he went out into the world, was to be able to send home something to help. In mutual, unexpressed affection and respect, and in mental life it was, however, rich. From both sides came something gritty, strong and tenacious: dashed with a spice of reckless irascibility from the elder Thomas. Carlyle can tell his mother that none of her children are 'snools.' 'We have not the blood of snools in our bodies, we are all Scots to the very heart.' To the end the Carlyles, without much talking about this or anything else, were a coherent family, and this coherence stands for Thomas the Doubter when all else seems to shake. Mainhill is one of the most real homes in literature. Like other poor homes it gave its children early contact with the great realities of life — work, birth, death, sickness, sorrow and unspoken kindness. Seven brothers and sisters were born after Thomas: at Mainhill one of these sisters and his father's brother died. While he was in Edinburgh as a student a darker tragedy brushed the family in the temporary clouding of the mother's fine mind, an affliction from which she completely

recovered. Nothing is more moving, in his Reminiscences of his father, than her little postscript to his sister's letter telling Thomas of his death.

'My mother adds in her own hand: "It is God that has done it; be still my dear children — Your affectionate mother — God support us all." '

To both parents the great spiritual forces were overpoweringly real. But there was laughter in Mainhill as well as work, for these mostly silent people were capable of gargantuan mirth and mischief. Thomas as a boy was a leader in pranks. When he passed from Hoddam Kirk School to Annan Grammar School, his great natural strength protected him from the physical miseries boys inflict on one another, if not from other unhappiness.

Of these boyhood years, first at school and then between fourteen and nineteen, at Edinburgh University, we know little enough, though it is easy to imagine them. Quite natural it seemed, in Ecclefechan, that the mason's son should fare to college and be a minister; if it cost sacrifices in food and clothing, none grudged them. The lad made his way on foot over the hills — a three-days' tramp; and took his dreams to Edinburgh, to be disappointed. The lectures, dry, formal,

uninspiring and disconnected, did not give him what he sought: not that way was any answer to the questions stirring in him to be found. Deep hidden among those questions lurked a growing doubt as to the career of minister, looming at the end of his six years' course. Decision could wait: its difficulty, however, helped to make him snatch, at nineteen, at the chance of earning. By open competition he secured the post of mathematical tutor at his old school in Annan. Out of his princely salary of sixty-five pounds per year he paid for board and books and contrived to save. Grim economy in these growing years — 'the paltry, ill-cooked morsel' which was his 'daily pittance' then and in his Edinburgh lodgings, and, indeed, right on to his marriage — laid the seeds of dyspepsia which the medical science of the time was to prove incompetent to eradicate. From that and sleeplessness — occupational disease of brain workers — he was always to suffer: though many even of his earliest letters — 'Never mind that hypochondria of mine: at bottom nothing wrong' — show that he himself had a laugh ready for the drama he made of these and other miseries.

After two years at Annan, he transferred to Kirkcaldy, again as a mathematical tutor, succeeding Edward Irving, a man but a few years older than himself and equipped with every

endowment for easy success which he lacked. To the infinite credit of both, this first encounter led to a friendship, Carlyle's first with any man of his own age with mental powers at all adequate to meet his. Of it there is a record in the *Reminiscences*, wonderful as a re-creation by an old man of the spirit and eyes of his youth, and containing a singularly just portrait both of Irving and of the young Carlyle. If Edward Irving lives to-day outside the circle of the sect he founded, it is because Carlyle described him. It did not look like that at the time, or for many years to come. Irving, first as a licentiate priest, speaking to his Presbyterian congregation in impassioned tones that surprised and at times a little shocked them; then, within a few years, assistant to the great Dr. Chalmers at Glasgow; was visibly rising like a star. He had every easy charm, every quality lacking in his successor at Kirkcaldy, 'Proud, shy, poor, at once so insignificant-looking and so grim and sorrowful.' Such is Carlyle's account of himself, and it may be his own face he describes in *Sartor*, with 'the gravity as of some silent, high-encircled mountain pool, perhaps the crater of an extinct volcano; into whose black deeps you fear to gaze: those eyes, those lights that sparkle in it, may indeed be reflexes of the heavenly stars, but perhaps also glances from the region of nether

fire.' Shy, no doubt, he was; but insignificant this tall, gaunt person, with the hewn features and brilliant blue eyes, can never have been: too significant rather, both in aspect and in mind, to be comfortably accommodated in the Annan and Kirkcaldy parlours which even Irving's fluent and forthcoming personality, with accepted distinction to back it, had found irksome. What Carlyle felt wrong with himself at this time is suggested in a letter to a college friend:

'The thought that one's best days are hurrying darkly and uselessly away is grievous. It is vain to deny it, my dear friend, I am altogether an unprofitable creature. Timid, yet not humble, weak, yet enthusiastic; nature and education have rendered me entirely unfit to force my way among the thick-skinned inhabitants of this planet.'

Common enough cause of suffering in young people of unrecognised power is this timidity, shyness, thinness of skin: this sense of not fitting into the world as it is. In his case it was sharpened by the long struggles through which he had to pass before he found his work in life. He wrote to his mother, about this time, 'Without figure, I am not a genius, but a rather sharp youth, discontented and partly mismanaged, ready to work

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at aught but teaching, and to be satisfied with the ordinary recompense of every son of Adam.' He did not want to teach; the doors of the ministry were closing against him. Contact with Irving, argument with him, reinforced his certainty that the church was not his vocation and evoked a more painful doubt as to orthodox Christianity as a creed. This doubt was dreadful both in itself and because of the pain he knew it caused to the believing parents who were showing such loving patience and silent trust in him. He saw himself as disappointing them not only by want of success but by want of faith—a far more serious matter. Though they said nothing, he knew; though he said nothing, they knew.

After two years in Kirkcaldy, he had saved ninety pounds and could return to Edinburgh, this time with intent to study law. Moreover, he helped his brother John to go there as a medical student. In Edinburgh he could keep himself by tutoring and, gradually, a certain amount of literary hackwork came his way—such as articles in Brewster's *Edinburgh Encyclopædia* and translating Legendre's *Eléments de Géométrie*. He taught himself Italian, German and Spanish, as well as French, and read enormously, storing his marvellous memory with its remarkable equipment.

THOMAS CARLYLE

These years in Edinburgh, broken by holidays at home and a period at Hoddam, represent the first crucial watershed in Carlyle's life. In them he passed from youth to manhood. They must be felt and understood if the later Carlyle is to be understood. They were years mainly of solitude, and of solitude darkly occupied by a sustained spiritual conflict, painful to the point of anguish, hard for an easily sceptical generation to visualise, far less comprehend. Night and day the young man, through his work, his reading, and in the silence of his soul, wrestled with himself. He was victorious in the end, but he bore the marks of the battle all his life. Later he could have said, with a truth of which a faint echo only reaches to the light-hearted, 'Though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee'; but at this stage it seemed as though even that desperate affirmation were refused him. He had a powerful intellect; it must work; and it worked out to a destructive negative. To look without only forced the same lesson home into his unhappy conscience. Few of his contemporaries saw, as plainly as did this lonely student in his high perched Edinburgh flat, how the workers were being goaded to revolt by the insane fears, selfish blindness and timid tyranny of their rulers. The bitter aftermath of the long wars was being harvested in hatred; cruelty and stupidity were

triumphant. The contrast between rich and poor grew daily more shocking. James Carlyle, who had known hardships enough, noted 'that the lot of the poor man was growing worse and worse; that the world could not and would not last as it was'; his son, looking out on the grim and unlovely poverty of the Edinburgh most people forget, saw no true guidance anywhere; no sign of the ruling of a God. How could he believe?

To deny the faith that was the life-spring of the beings he loved best seemed black treachery: treachery to them, to his affection for them and to the passionate need of his own being for belief. Yet his sincerity compelled denial. Between the two strongest principles of his being—his love and his honesty—there was a war that sundered it and set abysses yawning before his soul. His nature demanded faith: his intellect refused. These three years of misery were years mainly of silence. More than ten years later he wrought one aspect of them into the texture of *Sartor*. At the time, however, writing was wellnigh impossible: had he remained in their darkness he might never have written. This part of his biography was to pass, in the main, into his silence and stay there. But it coloured his whole future thought, giving it that 'preternatural' accent which is special to him; which no one else in English literature has

quite got. There are mystical writers in English: a long line of them: but Carlyle's solid supernaturalism is his own. For him the spiritual is wrought into the texture of the material. The mind has a body: the soul lives in action. So, in these years, his pain and horror took on the aspect, not of nightmare, but of a more terrible actuality. He saw nothingness face to face. In his own flesh, in the fibres of his own tissue, he was rent by the denial and the contradiction that make the travail and anguish of life itself, and knew a death more fearful than that of the body. His pain was not personal only: it was universal. His despair was not of his own happiness, but of the goodness of the world. Open-eyed, he saw the sun of faith go down, plunging the universe in blackness, a desolation deserted of God. Though the sight seared his eyeballs, he would not bandage or avert his gaze. He went to the end of the world and looked over the wall. Never could he forget, though he did conquer, that vision, or be other than alien to those who knew it not.

At the darkest period in this struggle, when the icy grip of nothingness had been accepted, and the sharp torment of the Everlasting No had been succeeded by the apathy, to him more dreadful, of the Centre of Indifference, Edward Irving took him to Haddington and introduced him to a

former pupil, Jane Welsh. At once the heart he had thought dead to sensation gave a sudden mighty throb. A flash of pure light lit his darkness, and, in that flash, he knew his own. He may have felt a passing attraction to other young women: he was six-and-twenty, and though a singularly pure-minded, a quite normal young man: but this was different, and he knew it.

That Jane did not, for long, know it too was equally natural. She was the bright particular star of the not very thickly-spangled firmament of Haddington, where the father she had lost in 1819, when she was eighteen, had been its doctor, and a most respected and honoured citizen. She had every just right to think well of herself—she was pretty enough to pass for beautiful in provincial Scotland, clever, lively, and full of charm. The experience of having young men fall in love with her was no novelty: she had perhaps toyed with the idea of a grand passion for Edward Irving, who had been her tutor. A natural egoist, she had veins of the shrewdest hard sense in her composition, and was by no means disposed to think a gawky young man, who, however remarkable in mind, had no grace of manner and no achieved distinction to compensate for its lack, had the right to assume that she was bowled over because he was. Quite naturally she snubbed

Carlyle's eagerness; equally naturally kept him attached. She was no easy, simple miss, pining to be married; no romantic head-in-air, unwilling to inspect and interrogate feelings that were to determine the whole of life; and while interested, she was not in love. Interested she was. She saw more in Carlyle than the gawky exterior; gleams even of something larger and grander than the superficial brilliance of Irving. Refusing to entertain his affections, she nevertheless consented to be his friend. In the years between 1821 and 1826 they met occasionally in Edinburgh and Haddington and wrote constantly. No novel is more enthralling than the two volumes of their letters, edited by Alexander Carlyle and published in 1908.

To read these *Love Letters* is not only to receive an impression impossible to put aside of the dawning splendours of Carlyle's mind and heart, laid open to her with the most magnificent frankness, and of a passion in that heart at which no romantic could cavil; but also of respect for the honesty with which Jane resisted the torrent sweeping over her, until she knew that her own heart at last spoke with the same voice as his. Impossible to argue with anyone who, after reading her letters, doubts that she loved him before she married him. There is a difference in what Carlyle felt for her

and what she felt for him: they were very different beings. Jane was not built to care as Thomas Carlyle did: few men, few women are: but she cared with all of her there was to care with.

To read the letters is to see the clouds of misapprehension rolling back from him and from her, and to feel that here are two individuals whose characters and whose relation must cause the most pessimistic to think better of human nature. How little, for instance, of the legendary Thomas or the legendary Jane remains after one reads the entire frankness and, at the same time, the perfect kindness of his reference to Edward Irving (for whom Froude would have us believe Jane cherished to the last a frustrated passion) in the following letter written early in 1823:

‘The truth is, our friend has a radically dull organ of taste; he does everything in a floundering, awkward, ostentatious way. I have advised him a thousand times to give up all attempts at superfineness and be a son of Anak, honestly at once, in mind as in body: but he will not see it thus. Occasionally, I confess, I have envied him this want of tact, or rather the contented dimness of perception from which it partly proceeds: it contributes largely to the affectionateness and placidity of his general character:

he loves everything because he sees nothing in its severe reality; hence his enthusiastic devotion, his eloquence, and the favour he gives to all and so gets from all. I still hope he will improve considerably but not that he will ever get entirely free of these absurdities. And what if he should not? He has merit to balance ten times as many, and make him still one of the worthiest persons we shall ever meet with. Let us like him the better, the more freely we laugh.'

Jane laughs back; and they both continue to 'like him the better.' No Bluebeard's cupboard here, plainly.

Perusal of their letters compels respect and affection for both, and the clearest assent to his declaration: 'It would be little less than impious to renounce this heavenly feeling that unites us. Has not a kind Providence created us for one another? Have we not found one another? And might not both of us go round the planet seeking vainly for a heart we could love as well?' He knew, as he told her, that 'the law of our existence is that good and evil are inseparable always: the heart that can taste of rapture must taste of torment also, and find the elements of both in all things it engages with.' This he never forgot. But he also knew that there are a feeling and a truth beyond

good and evil. He convinced Jane because he had convinced himself, because in these years he had won the great battle. Tangible achievement, such as the world could see, might be remote, but the achievement of self-mastery, of captaincy over his own soul, of a faith by which he could live and work, was there, and she saw it.

‘Qui n’a pas vaincu a trente ans, ne vainquera jamais,’ said de Maistre. Carlyle entered the thirties victorious: he had found the clue. He found it through the study of German literature, which he was to open effectively to British readers, as Coleridge had not succeeded in doing. Above all, through Goethe. Goethe was his great discovery, and his saviour. In 1823, in the intervals of tutoring the young Bullers, he was deep in a translation of *Wilhelm Meister*. The task was difficult and laborious, but that did not frighten him. To his brother John he wrote:

‘I say, Jack, thou and I must never falter. Work, my boy, work unweariedly. I swear that all the thousand miseries of this hard fight, and ill-health, most terrific of them all, shall never chain us down. By the river Styx, no, it shall not. Two fellows from a nameless spot in Annandale shall yet show the world the pluck that is in Carlyles.’

The work was indeed a labour of love, for in Goethe he had found what he needed: a faith and a man. The man, living embodiment of the faith, was as important to him as it was; his religion could be no abstract ideology, for him the 'robes of light' must encircle a *man*. With reverent gratitude he later told his young friend, John Sterling, what had happened. 'The sight of such a man was to me a gospel of gospels and did literally, I believe, save me from destruction, outward and inward.' 'Goethe's poetry,' he wrote in 1828, 'is no separate faculty, no mental handicraft: but the voice of the whole harmonious manhood.' His great contribution, which saved Carlyle, was his knowledge that 'the universe is full of goodness; that whatever has being, has beauty.' In Goethe this faith was no easy, instinctive achievement. His 'lofty and impetuous mind' had been once 'dark, desolate and full of doubt, more than any other.' He transcended the agony of doubt and disbelief, but he had been there. He 'descended into the gulf, tamed and rendered it habitable.' He knew, endured and conquered. Greater difference there might not seem to be in nature than that between Carlyle, at any time, and, above all, between the Carlyle of the late twenties, savage, suffering, unknown, passionately kicking against the pricks, a fiery

aboriginal in a world muffled in the cere-cloths of convention, and Goethe. But the eye of the young Scot could discern the storms through which Goethe had reached to calm. 'Ah, yes,' he says, writing long after Goethe's death, to Emerson, who evidently found Goethe smug, 'one day you will find that this sunny-looking, courtly Goethe held veiled in him a prophetic sorrow deep as Dante's—all the nobler to me and to you that he *could* so hold it. I believe this: no man can see as he sees that has not suffered and striven as man seldom did.' To Goethe, Carlyle sent his translation of *Wilhelm Meister* (published in 1824) and later the *Life of Schiller* (published in 1825). Of this Goethe thought so well that he wrote an introduction to a German translation, for which he arranged. He read all that Carlyle had written—occasional articles in magazines only at that time—and saw what was, for fifteen years yet, to be thickly hidden from the English-speaking world. Carlyle, he told Eckermann, 'is a moral force of great importance. There is in him much for the future, and we cannot foresee what he will produce and effect.'

To Carlyle, the fact of Goethe was more than his recognition of himself, though that was precious. The fact saved him. At last he could say, 'I know in what I believe.' Knowledge of

belief was also knowledge of what he had to do. Sheer economic difficulties, the meaning of want of recognition in terms of the domestic budget, were, again and again, and even as late as 1839, when the *French Revolution* was finished, to compel him to wonder whether he might not have to seek some other occupation as bread winner; that was another matter. It did not affect his conviction or shatter his faith. He had a dour, inherited patience, but the fortitude with which he endured rebuffs, disappointments and the desert of silence in which his impassioned voice reverberated, was based on a certainty no external fortune could dislodge.

Strong in that certainty he overleapt the obstacles set between him and his personal happiness. Jane's heart won, the rest was easy: there was nothing either in pecuniary difficulties or the problem of Mrs. Welsh's abode to baffle their united wills. So, in the second week of October, 1826, Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh were, in the parish church of Templand, in the presence of Mrs. Welsh and John Carlyle, made man and wife. Jane had visited Mainhill, and also Scotsbrig, to which the family removed in the spring of that year, and a thorough mutual recognition had taken place. Writing a few weeks before her

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marriage to an intimate friend, she said that Carlyle

‘possesses all the qualities I deem essential in my husband, a warm, true heart to love me, a towering intellect to command me, and a spirit of fire to be the guiding star of my life.’

After eighteen months in Edinburgh, in the late spring of 1828 they moved to Craigenputtock, an upland farm on a high ridge of West Dumfriesshire. There they lived for six years: until Carlyle, ready to turn from the prophetic past to the prophetic present, moved to London, henceforth to be his home: turned from the life of solitary self-communing to the thronging world of men. Craigenputtock was solitude: a solitude such as only strong spirits can enjoy. If Jane missed ‘society,’ which she frankly enjoyed, she had the solitude *à deux* of which true lovers dream and few achieve. ‘I have everything here,’ she wrote in 1832, ‘my heart desires that I could have anywhere else, except society, and even that deprivation is not to be considered wholly an evil. . . . My husband is as good company as reasonable mortal could desire.’ For him the six years at Craigenputtock provided the necessary quiet tilling and watering of the gathered seeds of wis-

dom and courage. It was out of himself, not out of others, that he was to draw his work; and to the last 'Solitude is what I long and pray for. In the babble of men my own soul goes all to babble, like soil you are for ever screening, tumbling over with shovels and riddles: in which no fruit can grow.'

The dismal picture of the place drawn by Froude is coloured by the latter's Victorian horror of Scottish scenery. To him the landscape was detestably bleak; that the house was set high and the nearest neighbour a mile off, appalled his snug mind. He saw no beauty in

'whinstone mountains: peat bog: bare wolds alternating with primeval crags and the shade of leafy trees; peopled with Galloway oxen, grouse and black-faced sheep, and here and there a brown-faced herdsman,'

felt only a dreary emptiness in the wide, free view, looking away into Ayrshire and the Burns country and over the granite of Galloway. He felt the chill not the thrill of the upland air: had no eyes for the austere grandeurs of the distant prospect. Because he would have been miserable at Craigenputtock he assumes, despite direct evidence to the contrary, that Mrs. Carlyle was.

In a recently discovered letter to Goethe's

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friend, Eckermann,¹ Carlyle describes their life on what he calls this 'sort of Crusoe's Island, where the whole happiness or sorrow depends on the Islander himself.'

'We are busy making clean gravel roads, digging gardens for the planting of many a flower and shrub in the Spring. These grim moors are all icebound for the present, and doubly stern and solitary. Nevertheless we bolt the door against Frost, and utterly defy him with blazing fires. By day I lop trees for exercise, or gallop down the valley on an Irish nag: and at night, when the curtains are all down, and the hearth swept, and the fire bright and strong, it is even a luxury to listen to the piping of the tempests and think that far and wide the black winter is looking in on us in vain.'

Such a picture has not the horrors for us it had for Froude. The Carlyles were more modern in spirit than their biographer.

Dark days there were at Craigenputtock as well as sunny, but the shadows, when they came, came from without, not from within. Carlyle

¹ *Yale Review*. July, 1926.

believed in himself and his message, and Jane shared his belief: of outside recognition small sign, as yet. For the remarkable articles he wrote for *Fraser's* and the *Edinburgh Review*, payment was meagre and slow in coming, and neither editor showed any eagerness in soliciting contributions from that dangerous pen. In the spring of 1831 the wolf was very near the door. There had been a series of bad harvests: ('God pity the poor,' wrote Carlyle in his *Journal*). His brother Alec, who had been farming with them, was compelled to go: Larry, the beloved farm horse, died of overwork. In a moment of despair he consulted Francis Jeffrey, his wife's cousin, then editor of the *Edinburgh*. All that Jeffrey could suggest was an Excise clerkship—a suggestion, with slight variations, to be repeated five years later, by another blindly prosperous friend, Basil Montagu. When in the summer he took the MSS. of *Sartor* to London to find a publisher, he failed; no one wanted it. Six months in London, where his wife joined him, established interesting personal contacts: he met Wordsworth and Coleridge, old Samuel Rogers and young John Stuart Mill; but it did not show him how to live by writing. When he suggested to the *Edinburgh* an article on Luther they jibbed; sending him instead Thomas Hope's book on 'Man' to review—a book that would be

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utterly forgotten had he not made of his review the superb thing he called *Characteristics*, written, like the noble vindication of Samuel Johnson, during these London months: months darkened by the death, early in 1832, of his father.

To Craigenputtock he came back, poor as he left it in worldly hope, enriched, however, in spirit by one real friendship. On his first meeting with Mill he described him to his wife, still in Scotland, as

‘a fine clear enthusiast, who will one day come to something; yet to nothing Poetical, I think: his fancy is not rich: furthermore, he cannot *laugh* with any compass. You will like Mill.’

Carlyle at this time was thirty-six; Mill five-and-twenty. In Mill's development everything had been orderly and planned; over-planned, indeed, with little room left for native growth and no lost motion. In background, nurture and temperament the men were poles asunder; Mill a garden plant, Carlyle a rude thistle, sappy and thorny: Mill carefully trained to be the expositor of pure reason and sweet reasonableness, refusing to believe anything he could not prove: Carlyle full of passionate emotional certainties and a realism, warmed by Homeric laughter, that knew

facts by touch rather than by argument. Beneath these surface differences, however, there lay in both a real love of truth, a natural purity of heart and candour of mind, and an unswerving belief in goodness. As Carlyle said in one of those letters to Mill (published by Alexander Carlyle in 1923) which are among the clearest windows into his own soul:

‘When two men are agreed in recognising one another’s common recognition of the truth, there is the beginning of all profitable communion between them; and nothing is more interesting henceforth than the friendly conflict of their differences. Hesitate not, I pray you, neither in this August nor at any other time, to show me the whole breadth and figure of your dissent: God knows I need guidance, both as to my own state and that of others, very much, and then it is hardly once in a twelve-month that one hears the smallest true monition, any word of criticism worthy of aught other than instantaneous oblivion.’

They could talk to one another. During Carlyle’s time in London they did talk, greatly; when he returned to Scotland they wrote; and their affection lasted to the end. True, in the later

years Carlyle was to feel a certain petrification coming over Mill; to say, sadly: 'I love him much, as a friend frozen within ice for me,' and to lose the power of free expression to him; but they never failed in mutual recognition.

Carlyle felt in Mill the soul that was to free him from the bondage of the utilitarians; while Mill's lucid apprehension from the start perceived in Carlyle a quality the more precious to him that he lacked it himself:

'You I look upon as an artist, and perhaps the only one now living in this country; the highest destiny of all lies in that direction, for it is the artist alone in whose hands truth becomes impressive and a living principle of action.'

Whereat Carlyle laughed and said he should be satisfied to be rated an honest artisan, though he welcomed such exaggeration 'from a man of Mill's clearness and cool deliberation.'

'Neither, after all, does our relation depend upon that, nor need any length of years diminish or disturb it; for it rests on a true basis, and is a relation between two Somethings, and not between two Nothings.'

One might search long for a better index of the difference between them than that suggested in an entry in his *Journal*, late in 1833:

‘Oct.—No man in modern times, perhaps no man in any time, ever came through more confusion with less imputation against him than Lafayette. None can accuse him of variableness; he has seen the world change like a conjuror’s pasteboard world; he stands there unchanged as a stone-pillar in the midst of it. Does this prove him a great man, a good man? Nowise—perhaps only a limited man.

‘The difference between Socrates and Jesus Christ! The great Conscious; the immeasurably great Unconscious. The one cunningly manufactured; the other created; living and life-giving. The epitome, this, of a grand and fundamental diversity among men. Did *any* truly great man ever go through the world without *offence*; all rounded in, so that the current morals systems could find no fault with him? Most likely, never.’

The passage is a picture in little of the disturbing richness of its writer’s mind: a glowing oil painting, with mysterious depths of shade and fascina-

ting problems of surface: beside it that of Mill resembles some reserved etching, exquisitely enclosed and finished, and with a queer colour of its own. As Carlyle said, he too was a 'Something.'

Sartor, the most remarkable book of a century, parent of a whole new brood of modern works, at once work of art and message of thrilling penetration, lay unpublished and, apparently, unpublishable, in his desk. He said nothing about it, beyond the remark, to Mill, that he had returned to the 'hydra-headed method of publishing myself, through so many monstrous periodicals. Alas, it is that I have no better method: otherwise it were to be named a bad one. I had hoped that, by and by, I might get out of periodicals altogether and write Books . . . but, alas, there are no Books to be written now, unless you have an independent money capital.' Even the publishing of articles grew more difficult. Jeffrey laughed at Carlyle's 'Inspired word,' and derided his 'prophetic attitude.' His view was, as is generally that of the friends of a genius, 'Why can't the fellow be like other people? Why all this fuss about ideas?' Other editors were either afraid of him or in such real, if bewildered disagreement, that they had no desire to take risks. For in everything Carlyle said there sounded a

voice alarmingly distinct and quite dreadfully emphatic.

‘Such a mode of writing seems to me in these days especially the only fruitful one: emphasis in uttering, what is it but the natural result of entireness in believing; the *first* condition of all worth in words spoken, and quite especially precious in a despicable, sceptical, “supposing,” weathercock, foundationless era such as ours.’

Belief—that was the alien note: and the more alien the more apt to sound like a scream in unaccustomed ears, as did Wagner’s ‘discords’ fifty years ago and those of Strauss ten. For Carlyle, a deeply believing man, there was a pain, rising at time to anguish, in his inability to get his voice heard: not because it was his, but because it was true. This pain irked him more than want of recognition or even of funds. His mind was working, not among regrets or theories or dreams, but on the facts of the life teeming around, unintelligible to itself, but for him shot with a meaning that he must disentangle. His vision was no unrelated thing: it was a vision for men and of them. His letters to Mill—the most intimate of his correspondents at this time, because the one man he then knew with whom he could freely exchange

ideas—show his mind, with undefeated energy, addressed always to reality. By 1833, it was turned to what he saw as the ‘grand *work* of our era’—the French Revolution. He read enormously: Mill lent him books, beginning with Thiers and ranging down to contemporary memoirs, pamphlets, portraits, maps; the huge significance of the thing absorbed him. One seems, in reading these letters, to see the raw material being poured into a furnace which seizes, consumes, transmutes and will ultimately render the essential metal back, hard as truth. Late in October 1833, writing to Mill, then in Paris, ‘that crackling, sparkling, never-resting chaos,’ he remarks that no two manners of existence could be more different than theirs:

‘I sit here in the middle of moors, of leafless or red-leaved trees, in the blustering of winds, and desolate rain; in the completest isolation; conversing only (thro’ heaps of Books) with the absent or the dead; nothing alive in my environment but myself and my coal fire.’

The life in the fire may have been dim, but the smallest piece of his own writing gives a sense of vitality that pulsates and tingles over the years.

And it was not in his writing only. Carlyle

was a man, not a pen in human form, and a competent, athletic, effective man; handy in the house, useful in the farm and garden, reasonably skilful in business transactions. The strength and sap of his thought came from a large, rich and thoroughly masculine nature, which sounded every note in the normal human diapason with a full and warm resonance. He had a powerful and resilient nervous organisation, cased in a powerful physical envelope. The hardships of his youth impaired his digestion; work late at night made sleep at once important and wayward; but up to his seventies physical and mental vigour remained intact and were fully and constantly used in the service of his neighbours. Not of 'humanity' or 'the species' — notions eminently distasteful to one of the most human men who ever breathed. The 'guidance and purpose of any real Benefactor of mankind' lie, he is sure, much nearer home; the 'working out of what is best and purest in *himself*: in this lie for him all the Law and the Prophets.' It was about that he was concerned, not about 'Mankind — when I and thou are quite past helping.' The 'present John Mill is no common Radical, and daily growing more uncommon': to the 'future John Mill' he propounds a creed:

'The good of the Species (a thing infinitely

too deep for my comprehending) I leave, with the most perfect trust, to God Almighty, the All-governing who does comprehend it, believing withal (when I do consider Causes and Effects — which is as rarely as possible) that no good thing I can perform, or make myself capable of performing, can be lost to my Brothers, but will prove in reality all and the utmost that I was capable of doing for them.'

No man was swifter in recognition of a brother, a real man.

He felt one in the visitor who broke into the silence of Craigenputtock in the late summer of 1833. Bringing an introduction obtained, at his own request, from Mill, a young American, Ralph Waldo Emerson, sought Carlyle out on his island because in what he had read of him he found something he wanted. Here was a voice that stirred the young Bostonian as did no other English voice then speaking. Emerson, remote as he might well have seemed, Carlyle recognised and welcomed generously. He spent the night. They talked. The sure foundation was laid of a friendship that lasted through their lives and is recorded in two volumes of a correspondence which gives a new edge to one's appreciation of both. Emerson found Carlyle 'one of the most simple and frank

of men' with a 'streaming humour which floated everything he looked upon.' 'I loved him very much at once.' Following his own bent, he led the talk on to metaphysical topics, on which he found Carlyle 'honest and true' but undogmatic.

'Christ died on the tree: that built Dunscore Kirk yonder: that brought you and me together. Time has only a relative existence.'

His mind, Emerson noted, still returned to 'English pauperism, the crowded country, the selfish abdication by public men of all that public persons should perform'; and he found him busy with the notion of living in London.

Returning to New England, Emerson at once set to work to make Carlyle known there. 'I,' he wrote, 'with the most affectionate wishes for Thomas Carlyle's fame, am mainly bent on securing the medicinal virtues of his book for my young neighbours.' The book of which he spoke was *Sartor*. By this time — 1834 — it had at last found an unsatisfactory lodgement in *Fraser's Magazine*, in the last issues of that journal prior to its demise. Received in a silence broken only by uncomprehending derision, it still found no publisher willing to risk it as a book. In that form, the American edition, fathered by Emerson, came

before the English one. Emerson continued his friendly offices and Carlyle, thanks to him, began to draw a modicum of appreciation and income from America, at a time when he had real doubts whether to live by his pen at home were not impossible.

Meantime he had come to another turning point. In his very bones he felt the new era struggling painfully to birth; and, as Emerson noted, the 'huge machine' fascinated him. Not for nothing had he been born in 1795; the future stirred in him, deeply as his roots were set in the soil of the past. Writing of his father in 1832 he felt how 'a whole threescore and ten years of the Past had doubly died for me: it is as if a new leaf in the Book of Time were turned over': had bidden, with him, a solemn farewell to the 'Old Theorem of the Universe' while 'his son stands here lovingly surveying him on the verge of the New, and sees the possibility of also being true there.' The New called to him: it was in its confused ranks that he was to fight.

'Thousand voices speak to me from the distance out of the dim depths of the old years. I sit speechless. If I live I shall speak.'

he wrote in the chilly early months of 1834. His

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ears were not closed to those voices: but he heard the new motifs crashing in to the orchestra: confused, painful, at times discordant, hardly intelligible, but always poignantly human. They called for their interpreter. Not *there* but *here* and now he was called to work, and he knew it. Years before he had said that 'poetry must dwell in reality and become manifest to men in forms among which they live and move.' Six years after he had definitely made his home in London he put this view clearly to Emerson, who, speaking out of his own native tendency to withdrawal, counselled him to stay in solitude. Carlyle felt then what he was to put to his New England friend many years later. Writing about Emerson's Journal, *The Dial*, organ of Transcendentalism, he says that he 'loves it with a kind of shudder.'

'You seem to me in danger of dividing yourselves from the Fact of this present universe, in which alone, ugly as it is, can I find any anchorage, and soaring away after Ideas, Beliefs, Revelations and such like, into perilous altitudes, as I think; beyond the curve of perpetual frost, for one thing! I know not how to utter what impression you give me; take the above as some stamping of the fore hoof.

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Surely I could wish you *returned* into your own poor nineteenth century, its follies and maladies, its blind or half-blind but gigantic toilings, its laughter and its tears, and trying to evolve in some measure the hidden Godlike that lies in *it*;—that seems to me the kind of feat for literary men. Alas, it is so easy to screw oneself up into high and ever higher altitudes of Transcendentalism, and see nothing under one but the Everlasting snows of Himalaya, the Earth shrinking to a Planet, and the indigo firmament sowing itself with daylight and stars; easy for *you*, for me: but whither does it lead? I dread always, To inanity and mere injuring of the lungs!—“stamp, stamp, stamp”—well, I do believe, for one thing, a man has no right to say to his own generation, turning quite away from it, “Be damned!” It is the whole Past and the whole Future, this same cotton-spinning, dollar-hunting, canting and shrieking, very wretched generation of ours. Come back into it, I tell you;—and so, for the present, will “stamp no more”.

When, in the spring of 1834, he decided that the time had come to move from Craigenputtock to

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London, he accepted the facts of his time; accepted the industrial revolution which was making a new Britain; and instead of saying to his own generation 'Be damned,' took up the task of showing it how it might be saved.

CHAPTER III

LONDON

‘The wealth of a man is the number of things which he loves and blesses, which he is loved and blessed by.’

‘THROUGH Phlegethon-Fleetditch,’ he wrote on the eve of departure for London, ‘our course does lie.’ In London he and his wife had already spent six months, three years earlier, and met all kinds of notabilities there. To Jane, with her keen social sense, the move was full of interest and excitement; her adventurous spirit rejoiced in the risks of the enterprise. He was now thirty-nine, she six years younger. At this crucial turn in their life one can picture them, as they appeared to their friends. Carlyle’s tall, strongly-knit figure—he was an inch under six foot in height—was spare and erect; his thick hair black, with a fleck of grey here and there over the ears. It retained its dense mat-like texture to the end, grizzling but neither going white nor thinning noticeably; nor did his complexion lose its ruddy tinge, nor his eyes their piercing blue. Watts’ portrait is here truthful, though its subject was to complain, to Whistler, that Watts had not given him the ‘clean linen’ as to which he was particular. It was rather later that he discovered the soft, wide-brimmed felt

hat in which alone he was comfortable, and the ulster cloak worn, like the hat and the soft leather shoes he affected, with a complete disregard of convention. Though, so Gavan Duffy records in his *Conversations with Carlyle*—a book to be read for its truthful accent of real knowledge—‘he commonly spoke the ordinary tongue of educated Englishmen, if he was moved, especially if he was moved by indignation or contempt, he was apt to fall into what Mrs. Carlyle calls “very decided Annandale.”’ By his side Jane seemed smaller even than she was: a petite woman with distinct, interesting features, pale complexion, black hair and brilliant dark eyes, sparkling with mischief and taking everything in, she charmed no less than her brilliant husband. In both even casual acquaintance soon discovered funds of practical kindness and most uncommon sympathy, as well as wit.

From June 1834, to his death forty-seven years later, 5 Great Cheyne Row, as it was then called, was his home; up to 1866, when Mrs. Carlyle died, a real home, and felt as such by the friends who dropped in of an evening for tea and talk; after that, in the main, a place of waiting for the great summons of which he had no fear. The house had a bit of garden, to whose laying out his native and inherited skill was directed. It was

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quiet—Chelsea was then really a village—with easy access to open country for riding; it was cheap; it was reasonably near to friends like Mrs. Austin, Charles Buller and J. S. Mill. The normal routine of life was simple and regular. Carlyle worked all morning till about two o'clock. After the mid-day meal he went out walking or riding. Of riding he was especially fond and a kind friend, Mr. Marshall of Leeds, gave him a horse. Jane did not ride in London: later, she drove in the afternoon. In the evenings he worked again or sat reading unless friends came in, or, on comparatively rare occasions, they went out to one of those parties 'of Persons who have little to do except wander through a room or rooms and bustle and simmer about, all talking to one another as they best can.'

Once established there he settled down to a piece of work for which he had long been preparing by reading and thought. In his own view it was to be his last effort. If he failed in this, if the world had no use for him as a writer, he must seek other employment. This, however, it was in him to do: it cried out to be done. A year earlier he had written to Mill—'To me it often seems as if the right *History* (that impossible thing I mean by History) of the French Revolution were the grand poem of our time; as if the man who

could write the *truth* of that were worth all other writers and singers.' Undaunted by the failure of *Sartor*: by the knowledge that no editor wanted his articles, still less any publisher his books: undismayed by the fact that two hundred pounds was all he and his wife had in the world, he grappled with this 'impossible' task. Little encouragement, as yet, in it, save the faith of his wife and his own intense sense of truth and duty. Had he been able to accommodate himself, to fit himself into a group, to write what he did not wholly believe, his path might have been quite smooth. Among the friends to whom Mill introduced him in London was John Sterling, and Sterling's father was the leader-writer, the famous "Thunderer," of *The Times*. Safety, dignity, affluence would have been his—but on terms he could not accept. Unless he could write the whole of what was in his soul he had rather not write. His ideas and those of *The Times* were different as night from day: he could not without denying the light that was in him, work in harness with 'gigmen.' To that light he was throughout his life faithful. 'Nature owns no man who is not a martyr withal.' The reverence for fact and truth that he preached was for himself a commandment obeyed in great things as in small. Reverence for fact was the supreme law; and his ideas were facts demanding faithful

service. His wife shared and understood his attitude, with a completeness abundantly recognised by him — though not in the words that would have insulted it. On other understanding he could hardly count. Few even of his friends agreed with him.

John Sterling, becoming an intimate, though so much younger, criticised him freely, in particular his style in *Sartor*. Carlyle received his criticisms with entire sweetness of temper and accepted with gratitude his meagre appreciation of its substance. It was not appreciation that sustained him in the dark years, but a profound consciousness that he had something to give which must be given.

When he sat down to write the *French Revolution* he calculated that the £200, which was the sum of their resources, would see them through. After that, 'che sara, sara.' By the spring of 1835 the first volume was written, after infinite travail: and, as was his custom, the notes used were thrown away. He read and thought until his subject possessed him, and then, the furnace red-hot, struck the molten metal into shape. Execution exhausted him: the process and raw material disappeared. He could not judge the result or recall the stages. With this volume he was dissatisfied, but it was done. He lent it to J. S. Mill to read. He himself had moved on, out of the atmosphere

of preparation, which occupies the first volume, to the quite different atmosphere of action of the second: was deep in the chapter called 'The Feast of Pikes.'

On an evening in March, as he was sitting with his wife, Mill came in, looking so ghastly that they feared a terrible misfortune had overtaken him. So pitiable was his state that they were mainly concerned for him, even after he had stammered out the shattering news that the entire MS. was burnt. They spent a hideously long evening—for Mill could not go—in an effort to cheer him. Even next day, when the full force of the disaster had come home, it was of Mill's feelings he thought rather than of his own. The letter he wrote him must be quoted entire. It speaks for itself:

'MY DEAR MILL, —How are you? You left me last night with a look which I shall not soon forget. Is there anything that I could do or suffer or say to alleviate you? For I feel that your sorrow must be far sharper than mine; yours is bound to be a *passive* one. How true is this of Richter: "All evil is like a nightmare; the instant you begin to *stir* under it, it is *gone*."

'I have ordered a *Biographie Universelle*, this

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morning;—and a better sort of paper. Thus, far from giving up the game, you see, I am risking another £10 on it. Courage, my Friend!

‘That I can never write *that* volume again is indubitable: singular enough, the whole earth could not get it back; but only a better or a worse one. There is the strangest dimness over it. A figure thrown into the melting pot; but the metal (all that was golden or gold-like of that, and *copper*, can be gathered) is there; the model also *is* in my head. O my Friend, how easily might the bursting of some puny ligament or filament have abolished all light there too!

‘That I *can* write a Book on the French Revolution is (God be thanked for it) as clear to me as ever; also that if life be given me so long, I will. To it again, therefore! *Andar con dios!*

‘I think you once said you could borrow me a *Campan*? Have you any more of Lacre-telle’s things: his 18^{me} *Siècle* (that is of almost no moment). The first volume of *Genlis*’s *Mem?*, etc. But I find *Campan* (if I get the *Biographie*) is the only one I shall really want much. Had I been a *trained* compiler, I should not have wanted that. To make some search

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for it, I know, will be a kind of solace to you. 'Thanks to Mrs. Taylor for her kind sympathies. May God guide and bless you both! That is my true prayer.

'Ever your affectionate Friend,

'T. CARLYLE.'

The nightmare to which Carlyle refers had indeed visited him and was to recur in the hideous months of sheer inability to see his subject again. Mill insisted on being allowed at least to make good the hole in Carlyle's resources represented by the destruction of a year's work; and Carlyle finally accepted £100—as much for Mill's sake as his own. But though this kept the wolf from the door it could not give back the inspiration that had written the volume. To wrench himself back into a stage he had left behind he found appallingly difficult. The effort was fearful: it proved 'such a wretched paralysing torpedo of a task,' he wrote to Emerson in May, 'as my hand never found to do; at which I have worn myself these two months to the hue of saffron, to the humour of incipient desperation.' He had to give up the plan, which had made him happy, of going to Scotland with his beloved brother John, home from Italy. For weeks he could make no progress

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at all: at last, in July, the 'ungrateful and intolerable task' had hold of him again. In his journal at this time there is an entry which gives a swift picture of the Carlyle so many of his contemporaries and those who came after could not 'place.'

'The world looks often quite spectral to me; sometimes, as in Regent Street the other night (my nerves being all shattered) quite hideous, discordant, almost infernal. I had been at Mrs. Austin's, heard Sydney Smith for the first time guffawing, other persons prating, jargoning. To me through these thin cobwebs Death and Eternity sate glaring. Coming homewards along Regent Street, through street walkers, through — Ach Gott! Unspeakable pity swallowed up unspeakable abhorrence of it and of myself. The moon and the serene nightly sky in Sloane Street consoled me a little.'

Always this 'spectral aspect' was there for him: he was a Doppelgänger who felt himself and his brothers walking between two immensities. It is at the root of much of what seemed even to Emerson his wildness, exaggeration, even madness. He was haunted by a vision of the world as a whole and could not get used to it. His fellow-men

walked close to him and he felt, contending in them, forces akin both to the heavens over their heads and to the dark, unguessed at chasms under their feet. He made the French Revolution live largely because he saw it as no detached, finished, historical event, but as a picture, under a specially vivid light, of the boiling forces that were making the contemporary world.

By September he had re-written the first volume and wrote to his brother John an account of his deliverance.

‘By the real blessing and favour of Heaven I got done with that unendurable MS. on Monday last, and have wrapped it up there to lie till the other two volumes be complete. The work does not seem to myself to be very much worse than it was. It is worse in the style of expression but better compacted in the thought. On the whole, I feel like a man who had nearly killed himself in accomplishing zero. What a deliverance! I shall never, without a kind of shudder, look back at the detestable state of enchantment I have worked in for these six months and am now blessedly delivered from. The rest of the book shall go on quite like child’s play in comparison. Also I do think it will be a queer book, one of the queerest published in this

century, and *can*, though it cannot be popular, be better than most. My Teufelsdröckh humour, no voluntary one, of looking through the clothes, finds singular scope in this subject. Remarkable also is the "still death-defiance" I have settled into, equivalent to the most absolute sovereignty conceivable by the mind. I say "still death-defiance," yet it is not unblended with a great fire of hope unquenchable, which glows up silent, steady, brighter and brighter. My one thought is to be done with this book. Innumerable things point all that way. My whole destiny seems as if it had lost itself in chaos then (for my money also gets done then)—in chaos which I am to re-create or perish miserably—an arrangement which I really regard as blessed comparatively. So I sit here and write, composed in mood, responsible to no man and no thing; only to God and my own conscience. With publishers, reviewers, hawkers, bill-stickers indeed on the earth around me, but with the stars and the azure eternity above me in the heavens. Let us be thankful. On the whole, I am rather stupid; or rather I am not stupid, for I feel a fierce glare of insight in me into many things. Not stupid, but I have no *sleight of hand*—a raw, untrained savage—for every trained, civilised man has

that sleight, and is a bred workman by having it, the bricklayer with his trowel, the painter with his brush, the writer with his pen. The result of the whole is "one must just do the best he can for a living, boy," or, in my mother's phrase, "Never tine heart," or get provoked heart, which is likewise a danger.'

Another year's work and in January, 1837, the book was finished. Resources too were ended. Thanks, however, to the energetic efforts of Harriet Martineau and her friends a way of earning opened: he was to give a series of lectures on German Literature. He gave them: prepared the *French Revolution* for publication: saw it appear and fled to Scotsbrig. Disregarding reviews and General Election he stayed there for two months, reading novels and smoking in the garden with his mother. From there he wrote in July, again to his brother:

'The weather, after a long, miserable Spring, is the beautifullest I ever saw. The trees wave peaceful music in front of my window, which is shoved up to the very top. Mother is washing in the kitchen to my left. The sound of Jamie building his peat-stack is audible, and they are storing potatoes down below. . . . My one soul's

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wish is to be left alone, to hear the rustle of the trees, the music of the burn, and be vacant, as ugly and stupid as I like. There is soothing and healing for me in the green solitude of these simple places.'

To John Sterling, about the same time, he says: 'There is no idler, sadder, quieter, more *ghostlike* man in the world even now than I.' Most weary, flat and stale seem to him 'all the electioneerings and screechings and jibberings that the earth is filled with.'

'Men's very sorrows, and the tears one's heart weeps when the eye is dry, what is in that either. In an hour, will not death make it all still again? Nevertheless, the old brook—Middlebie Burn, we call it—still leaps into its "*caudron*" here, gushes clear as crystal through the chasms and dingles of its "*linn*," singing me a song with slight variations of score these several thousand years—a song better for me than Pasta's! I look on the sapphire of St. Bees Head and the Solway mirror from the gable window. I ride to the top of Blaeveery, and see all around from Ettrick Pen to Helvellyn, from Tyndale and Northumberland to Cairnsmuir and Ayrshire. Voir c'est avoir. A

brave old earth after all, in which, as above said, I am content to acquiesce without quarrel, and at lowest, hold my peace. One night, late, I rode through the village where I was born. The old kirkyard tree, a huge old gnarled ash, was nestling itself softly against the great twilight in the north. A star or two looked out and the old graves were all there, and my father and my sister; and God was above us all.'

The publication of the *French Revolution* was to prove, though slowly, the end of financial difficulties and of the silence in which his voice had, till then, resounded. For the moment he was saved by the cheques the faithful Emerson was sending him from across the Atlantic, and by lectures. From now on, he had won. As the years passed, other friends gathered round: the best of Europe and America flocked to the little house in Cheyne Row: but its simple ways did not change. Nor did the man himself. He had always talked immensely, when he talked at all: and lecturing might have been to him the easiest method of acquiring both praise and pelf. He rejected it, with a full awareness of his dangers. After the series on *Heroes* he did not again speak in public till the Edinburgh Inaugural of 1866.

The story of his life becomes the study of his books. The success of the *French Revolution* called for collected editions of his earlier writings, and most of the articles he had written from time to time for various journals were published as *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, in 1839, 1840, 1847 and, again, in 1857. In 1840 came *Chartism*, opening with its unforgettable description of Peterloo; here the 'Sphinx question' of the condition of England was faced with large, candid, human and intelligent eyes. A year later the lectures he had given on *Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History* came out in volume form. In 1843, *Past and Present* carried a stage further the thoughts and questions that had made *Chartism* so remarkable: it is, as Emerson aptly said, 'the *Iliad* of the English.' Since Piers Plowman there had been nothing like it. *Past and Present* broke from Carlyle in the middle of his long struggle with the 'waste continent of cinders' under which 'a great man (Cromwell) and a great action lay hidden.' Very early, in his conception of that task, he described it (in a letter of February, 1839) as an effort 'to get acquainted with England (a great secret to me hitherto).' In 1845 came *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches: with Elucidations*—a book revolutionising the then accepted view of the Great Protector, and of his

England; followed, two years later, by *Thirty-Five Unpublished Letters of Oliver Cromwell* (1847).

For long Carlyle had found 'the green and yellow slaves, grown green with sheer hunger in my own neighbourhood' more interesting to him than the brown and black: and this is the root idea in the *Original Discourses on the Negro Question* which gave such offence when published in 1849. In *Latter Day Pamphlets* (1850) he is concerned with these green and yellow slaves at home, with the problem of government and the need to escape from the mentality of 'Ol' Clo' — what he calls the 'exodus from Houndsditch.' In 1851 he broke off his labours on Frederick of Prussia to write the beautiful and singularly just *Life of John Sterling*, in which he captures the very pressure and accent of that rare but volatile spirit, and immortalises it by his affection. In 1858 came the first volume of the monumental *Frederick*: the last in 1865. In April, 1866, he came home from the triumph of the Edinburgh Inaugural to meet the shattering fact of his wife's death. After it there came only an article, *Shooting Niagara* (1867), the admirable chapters on the *Early Kings of Norway*, the *Essay on the Portraits of John Knox* (1875), and the *Reminiscences*, published by Froude in 1881 — the year of his death — to create a storm, now difficult to comprehend, which

grew to a tempest when Froude's *Biography* followed.

It seems strange, to-day, that the candour with which Carlyle expressed opinions on living contemporaries should have caused such a shock; still more strange that Froude's picture produced a revulsion of opinion about the author of a series of the most personal books in literature. Both shock and revulsion have now subsided; we can go back to the books and find the man expressed in them. Between Carlyle's teaching and his living there is as small a gap as is possible to a human being.

The gospel he preached for others, he practised. Work was his life, and no man worked more faithfully. Failure did not depress or success slacken his energy. Through both he held his course with fortitude. His instrument was personal, but his outlook never narrowed to egotism. His concern for the welfare of others was unremitting and practical. His effective aid could always be counted on to secure a public library, a park or picture gallery for the benefit of the community. He was a good citizen. True and upright in personal relations, loyalty in him was absolute. His affection was a rock, from which at any call of need or service, waters of healing tenderness gushed abundantly. The 'friends he had and

their adoption tried' were 'grappled to his soul with hooks of steel.' There were plenty of people for whom he had no use: more about whom he expressed his mind with entire frankness. He did not suffer fools gladly or claim to 'like everybody.' For shams, wobblers, hair-splitters, sentimentalists and phrasemongers, his contempt was hearty and expressed without squeamishness. True men, wherever he found them, he loved, and went on loving. And his love called forth an answering fidelity of attachment. He knew his own: authentic quality he recognised unfailingly. It was the basis of his reverence for his father; his beautiful relations with his mother, brothers and sister; his lasting attachment to Mill and Emerson; his affectionate patience for Harriet Martineau and Leigh Hunt (trying enough, in their different ways); as of his love for Robert Browning, Alfred Tennyson and Edward Fitzgerald, and his swift tribute to Chopin, Macready or Whistler—to mention only a few of his friends.

The bond between him and his mother was tender and close. So long as she was there he went up to Scotsbrig every year for his holiday, and wrote with unfailing regularity to her, as to his brothers and sister. His brother John, the doctor, was a most intimate and dear friend throughout the lives of both. Nor can any one who takes in

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all the evidence feel that he had much to reproach himself with in his relations with his wife. Jane, gifted and sensitive, had a critical faculty far beyond her creative power. Such creatures are bound to know unhappiness of a specially frustrate and therefore corrosive kind, because escape from the personal into the impersonal is denied them. She, no less than her husband, has been deeply wronged by the publication of papers meant for no eyes but her own: kept sacred even from his while she lived. That she loved him only those can doubt who assume that there is but one way of love, uniform through all the diversity of human character. In her way, she loved him; in his he loved her. She knew it.

If, in their forty years together, there were some hours, even some weeks of unhappiness, the fact is hardly remarkable. Most human beings find something to complain of, nor is affection a bar to its expression. Their companionship had its sharp moments, but they were but foam flecks on the steady tide of deep mutual feeling. Thomas and Jane were real people, individuals of strong will and personality, with sufficient native difference to make adjustment at once interesting and adventurous. Highly strung, sensitive, nervous and self-conscious, neither was conspicuously tranquil. There were the difficulties of every close

human contact, exaggerated, for outside observation, by the fact that each was unusually gifted with the power of expression. In Jane's case there was an exceptional command of all its sharper tones. 'Irony is a sharp instrument, but ill to handle without cutting yourself,' her husband reminded her. She had wit—and wit will create as well as use opportunities. In letters the most has to be made of everything, and she was an artist, with an artist's unscrupulous trick of dramatisation. Behind her humorous exaggerations and playful complaints anyone with a grain of imagination can discern a real security, shared by her correspondents. Conscious of powers and pains of her own, it irked her, at times, to be merely Mrs. Carlyle, and to have Carlyle's complaints always so much worse and more important than hers. That she did sincerely regard them as more important, that she knew it mattered more when he had a headache or could not sleep than when she had, did not, of itself, soothe her. She was not strong, and with no children's ailments to fuss over, she tended to fuss over her own. Because existence was, on the whole, uneventful, tiny incidents were given a pictorial value. Both had tempers. Both had silences. Both were Scots. Both were, in their varying ways, artists. Froude's heavy-handed and humourless treatment

of them forgets the artist and forgets Scotland. Coming into their lives when their affection was a deeply accepted fact, he seems to have been unable to see what was plain enough to Emerson, to Mill, to Gavan Duffy, to the Brownings, to Mazzini, and to all their less prejudiced intimates. Carlyle describes himself as a 'shy, stingy soul'; and in the small change of affection he may have been stingy. In its richer counters he was generous: no woman who received his letters had any justification for unbelief or a charge that too much was asked to be taken on trust. It is not only in the letters before marriage that the deep notes of passion and tenderness sound. They recur constantly. Not only did he love her; he told her so in direct and explicit language. Take, for instance, this, written in 1849, when Jane was away in Scotland and, as he knew, there visited her mother's grave:

'God help thee, my little one; think that, beside that grave, there is also one soul still alive who can never cease to love thee. Yes, after his own wild way—stern as the way of death—to love thee: that is a truth, and will remain one.'

He loved her, and she knew it. He valued her

judgment and always made her a sharer in his work — though he would not say, as Mill did of Mrs. Taylor, that she had written his books — delighted in praise and recognition of her, had frequent praise and recognition of his own for her qualities as housewife and companion. Because she was his companion she had to share the shadow as well as the light. 'If to anybody on earth, then surely to thee, its partner of good and evil, does the poor worn-out soul of me turn.'

Nearer to him than any other human creature, she shared with him the pains and penalties of genius: above all, its essential solitariness of spirit. Genius is, from one point of view, the power of communication. Yet the possession of that power carries with it a tragic knowledge of its limits. Is there not something ultimately incommunicable in every human soul? Are not suffering and loneliness the marks of consciousness? Moreover, success has its penalties. As time brought Carlyle recognition and gathered about him people who could understand and appreciate, Jane lost what, in the earlier, harder stages, had been her work in life. She had been ambitious for him, at a time when he was not ambitious for himself: accepting and believing in his genius when no one else did, she had been

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able to see herself as its guardian. At Craigenputtock, and in the first five years of London, she knew that her trust, loyalty and comprehension sustained her warrior and were precious to him. So, she shared intimately in work which she could feel as hers because she alone appreciated.

As his star rose and was perceived by everybody to be a planet of importance, there in the universal firmament, there were moments when, to her own sense, she became no more than part of his audience. Her occupation was gone. His mind—essential part of him—belonged then to the world, not to Jane Welsh. Natural that she should be a little sore, a little resentful when the new appreciation came close to him. For jealousy in any common sense, she had, and knew she had, no grounds. But to know a thing and to feel it are not always the same. She had not got his strong faith—that temperamental faithfulness and power of trust that made him a believer. She ought to have been sure of the rock beneath her feet; but there were times when she was not. She had always been there: he seemed to take her, her affection, her appreciation, for granted. There were moments when she felt she was part of his drudgery. New people seemed to receive an attention from him not extended to her. In the

Ashburton case, about which so much has been written, her self-esteem was hurt more than her affection. If he enjoyed the society of the Ashburtons and in particular of the lady, it was because he found her, from the first, a singularly intelligent as well as agreeable woman. That was the rub: it chafed Jane that he should go elsewhere for intellectual companionship. Lady Harriet was a great lady; her complete social command, like her personal elegance and grace of address, might have been forgiven had they not been united to wit and comprehension. That she was agreeable was an added, because it must be a secret, offence. Impossible to dislike her frankly; equally impossible not to suffer a pain exacerbated rather than assuaged by the knowledge that it was irrational. Fortunately the friend to whom Jane exposed her smart was both wise and tender-hearted, and endowed with a true sense of values. Mazzini, one may be sure, understood: his letter to her shows it. Froude, unhappily, did not: and, in the upshot, he has proved at least as unjust to Jane as to Thomas. To 'take sides,' whichever side is taken, is to display a dreadful blindness to the substance of affection.

Jane did suffer: who does not? Only the insensitive. On the major cause of her suffering Carlyle laid a faithful and truthful finger: he

might well have said of himself, as he said of Mill: 'No surgeon can touch sore places with a softer hand than you do.'

'My prayer is and has always been that you would rouse up the fine faculties that *are* yours into some course of real true work, which you felt to be worthy of them and you! Your life would not then be happy, but it would cease to be miserable, it would become noble and clear, with a kind of sacredness shining through it. I know well, none better, how difficult it all is, how peculiar and original your lot looks to you and in many ways *is*. Nobody can find work *easily*, if much work do lie in him. All of us are in horrible difficulties that look invincible—but that are not so. The deepest difficulty, which also presses on us *all*, is the Sick Sentimentalism we suck in with our whole nourishment and get ingrained into the very blood of us, in these miserable ages! I actually do think it the deepest. It is this that makes me so impatient of George Sand, Mazzini and all that set of Prophets—impatient so as often to be unjust to what of truth and genuine propriety of aim is in them. . . . It is not by *arguing* that I can ever hope to do you any service on that side. But I will never give up

the hope to see you adequately *busy* with your whole mind, discovering, as all human beings may do, that even in the grimmest rocky wilderness of existence there are blessed well-springs, there is an everlasting guiding star.'

She did not find her work; the everlasting guiding star was not there for her. He was her guiding star. One human being can hardly give to another the worship proper to God without resenting it. This resentment, which belonged to the quality of her feeling, not to anything Carlyle did or did not do, gave or did not give her, said or did not say, is the root of her discomfort.

A radically false view of life in Cheyne Row is given by an attention focused on irritations. For the truth one must turn to such a vision as given in Carlyle's letter to Emerson (December, 1838).

'In general Death seems beautiful to me; sweet and great. But life also is beautiful, is great and divine, were it never to be joyful any more. I read Books, my wife sewing by me, with the light of a sinumbra, in a little apartment made snug against the winter; and am happiest when all men leave me alone, or nearly

all—though many men love me rather, ungrateful that I am.'

When Emerson visited the Carlyles in London some nine years after this (in 1847) he noted in his diary:

'Carlyle and his wife live on beautiful terms. Their ways are very engaging and, in her book-case, all his books are inscribed to her as they came from year to year, each with some significant lines.'

This picture is confirmed in detail by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, who knew the household intimately, and by Mr. and Mrs. Browning, as well as by innumerable others. Gavan Duffy absolutely refutes the suggestion that Carlyle was irascible, disagreeable or domineering, or that gloom was his characteristic atmosphere. In a six weeks' journey through Ireland he found him the most even-tempered and kindly of companions: tolerant of difference and overflowing with good fellowship.

The dropped clue which perhaps accounts for misunderstandings is a sense of humour. With this both Thomas and Jane were richly endowed. David Masson, who knew them well, has, in the

lecture he calls *Carlyle Personally*, now unhappily out of print, administered a timely reminder of this:

‘Those about him that knew him best always felt that the most proper relation to much that he said and did was to take it humorously or suffuse it with humour; and that he himself had the same feeling and authorised it in others appeared in the frequency, almost the habitual constancy, with which he would check his conscious exaggerations at the last point with some ludicrous touch of self-irony, and would dissolve his fiercest objurgations and tumults of wrath in some sudden phantasy of the sheerly absurd and a burst of uproarious laughter. Without a recollection of this, many a little incident of his daily life is liable even now to misconstruction or to interpretation out of its just proportions. . . . It was one of Mrs. Carlyle’s habits, just because of her boundless respect and affection for her husband, to play in imagination with his little eccentricities, and amuse her friends and bewilder his worshippers with satirical anecdotes at his expense. One of the pleasantest sights in the Cheyne Row household on a winter evening was Carlyle himself, seated on a chair by the fire, or re-

clining on the hearthrug, pipe in mouth, listening benignantly and admiringly to those caricatures of his ways, and illustrations of his recent misbehaviours, from his beloved Jane's lips.'

Probably, as Masson suggests later, we who have not heard, can never hear, Carlyle's laugh, cannot hope fully to know him or the life of Cheyne Row. His sketch helps, better than any other piece of writing, to recapture that side of him. It is one which his own letters and journals inevitably hide. How a man seems to himself is never the whole of his story, least of all in the case of a writer with so tender a conscience and so vivid a perception of the universe in which he is but an atom, as 'Thomas the Doubter.' To others he gave a sense of warmth, of manly vitality: of passionate earnestness, but also of sane and abounding humour. To them he was the Believer, not the Doubter; and that his was the conquered doubt that is the basis of faith his work is there to prove. Emerson had little humour himself: but he noted, at his first meeting, and again later, how Carlyle's humour flowed over everything. His great gift of laughter bound him in brotherhood to Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning.

If we have been misled, it is, painful as the

judgment on ourselves that may follow the admission, his deep feeling that has misled us. Mrs. Browning, with the insight of a lover and a poet, goes straight to the point. In a letter to Mrs. Jameson (1851) she says:

‘Are you aware that Carlyle travelled with us to Paris? He left a deep impression with me. It is difficult to conceive of a more interesting human soul, I think. All the bitterness is love with the point reversed. He seems to have a profound sensibility—so profound and turbulent that it unsettles his general sympathies. Do you guess what I mean the least in the world? Or is it as dark as my writings are, of course?’ •

We like to pretend that the power to love is common. One proof of its rarity is the readiness with which Carlyle’s inconsolable and bitter grief in the loss of his wife has been interpreted as remorse. He was broken-hearted. That is the sum and substance of the pages of the *Reminiscences* devoted to Jane Welsh. He loved her; she was gone. His mind travelled back over the past, and it seemed to him he had not cared enough, had not been sufficiently watchful over or considerate of the dear one now reft from him. Has

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not everyone who ever cared known these pangs? Are they not sharp in proportion to the depth and quality of the severed affection?

‘Blind and deaf that we are! Oh, think if thou yet love anybody living; wait not till death sweep down the paltry little dust clouds and idle dissonances of the moment, and all be at last so mournfully clear and beautiful when it is too late.’

Late in 1866, the year of her death, writing to Emerson, he put, very simply, what had happened. ‘By the calamity of April last, I lost my little all in this world, and have no soul left who can make any corner into a *home* for me any more. . . . I should be among the dullest and stupidest, if I were not among the saddest of men.’ It is hard to bear with the stupidity that would deface this noble sorrow into retrospective neglect.

A similar dullness would read the ‘Wae, wae’ of the Journal as a cloud that hung low over the life of Cheyne Row. Melancholy he had. ‘All noble things are touched with that.’ It was part of the ground-tone of his nature. ‘Not a May game is this man’s life.’ His melancholy, however, was not personal. It belonged to his vision of this

‘Spectral necropolis, or City both of the Dead and the Unborn’ of which we are denizens.

Any survey of his life, any interrogation of those who knew him, any analysis of his bearing in intimate relations shows his teaching and his practice, his doctrine and his action as one. His was a unitary character, and one, for all the force and drive of his intellect, of a large simplicity of outline. The open record of his life from early boyhood to extreme old age—he had passed his eighty-sixth birthday when he died on February 5th, 1881—shows him consistent in action and idea. If fortitude—strength to do and to bear—is the first word that springs to the mind in connection with him, sympathy must be the second. This Harriet Martineau saw as his ruling trait. ‘Goodness,’ says Plutarch, ‘moves in a larger sphere than justice.’ Carlyle preached justice, but his action belongs to the ‘larger sphere.’ His field of vision has limitations; not so his straightness and his loyalty. In his behaviour, no less than in his writing, he gives noble scope to our conception of what may be done by man.

CHAPTER IV

KEYSTONE

‘Thou art not alone, if thou have Faith.’

THE highly critical article on Carlyle which Lord Morley wrote in 1877, and included in the first volume of his *Miscellanies*, closes with the following curious sentences:

‘In a word, he is a prophet and not a philosopher, and it is fruitless to go to him for help in the solution of philosophic problems. This is not to say that he may not render us much help in the far more momentous problems which affect the guidance of our own lives.’

Carlyle was still alive when this was written, and one would give a good deal for his comment. One comes upon it with some surprise, since it follows on a piece of criticism as destructive as the writer knew how to make it. Morley denies Carlyle permanence partly because he lacks ‘classic form,’ mainly because he is out of the ‘main stream of European thought and feeling.’ He proceeds to a detailed attack, interesting to-day mainly as an exhibition of Liberalism struggling to swim against the current of new ideas.

It is a thorough-going attack; Mill would have been more sympathetic than his young disciple. Then, at the close, as if feeling that the cudgels had been a thought too heavily administered, he pulls up, and casts the sudden bouquet of the final sentence.

For it Carlyle would hardly have thanked him. It takes away more than it gives, and while the things it takes away are precisely those that he valued, those it gives come in highly questionable shape. He thought he had a philosophy, though he did not care for the name, and that it was the most important thing he had. Individualist as he was, he rejected a view of morals, which made the problems of our own lives 'far more momentous' than those of the universe. For him they were one and the same. If he knew nothing about the universe, he knew nothing about morals. Belief, in his view, precedes conduct, and belief, however unconscious, refers back to a world greater than the narrow world of self. His own belief was the source from which all his ideas and thoughts sprang and to which they were structurally related. What he says in *Heroes* was literally true of himself.

'The thing a man does practically believe (and this is often enough *without* asserting it

even to himself, much less to others): the thing a man does practically lay to heart, and know for certain, concerning his vital relations with this mysterious Universe, and his duty and destiny there, that is in all cases the primary thing for him, and creatively determines all the rest.'

To praise his morals while rejecting his philosophy was to flatter a doctor by telling him that though his diagnosis was wrong his treatment was excellent.

This is, nevertheless, what has happened. Certain rules of conduct, deductions of his from a general theorem of the universe, are what survive of Carlyle in the minds of most, with a vague recollection of the unquiet poetry of his speech, and a nodding recognition of certain passages when quoted. The theorem itself is ignored or its existence denied, though, for its author, it was the pivot. There is in this a kind of retributive justice. Who ever uttered so many jeers and jibes at 'systems,' laughed so persistently at logic, or girded with such blank ingratitude at metaphysics? He has been taken at his word. It is assumed that the man who derided systems had none of his own. Nor is this the end of his responsibility. Although, after his series of lectures, first on German literature (1837) and then on

Heroes (1838, 1839, 1840), he refused the temptation to speak rather than write and never used this method again until he gave his Inaugural Address as Rector of Edinburgh University (1866)—delivered extempore—his writing is nearer to speaking than that of any other master of literature. It is, as Frederic Harrison, Gavan Duffy and others noted, exactly like his speech. He affects his readers as speakers affect their audiences. The strong flow, the sheer noise and reverberation of his voice, make close or logical attention difficult. His prose sets up powerful emotional and nervous vibrations. He excites his readers too much for them to be critical of the argument. In the upshot they are doubtful if there is one. Is there? Is there a connecting thread of idea which gives force and meaning to the whole? Or does he, as do many speakers, move from word to word, rather than from thought to thought, the impact of magnetic personality providing a stimulus as evanescent as it is potent? Was what he called his belief a mere emotional asseveration, without intellectual content or any kind of rigorous process behind it, of the essential goodness of the universe, continually iterated but neither proved nor, by him, capable of proof?

Such, certainly, is the implication conveyed

by most contemporary criticism and some in our own day. It is stated, for example, by a judge sane and appreciative as Professor Elton, that he was 'incapable of systematic thinking' and we must not expect 'a coherent body of doctrine' from him. Others suggest that, great as his service in undermining false beliefs, he did nothing but clear the ground. He declaimed a Gospel. Certain positive commandments survive. The ideas behind it have exploded in noise and fume. In fact, he was an orator, not a thinker, and time is wasted in looking for his constructive ideas. They were, in modern phrase, mere slogans; some, like 'Do the duty that lies nearest,' valid; others, like 'Right is might,' and the canon of reverence for heroes, of more dubious authenticity. These slogans will have to be interrogated, in their place. First, however, one must meet the question whether they are slogans merely or illustrations of a body of ideas, sufficiently grounded in reason, connected and articulated, to be called a philosophy.

He thought he had a philosophy, and that it was his most significant contribution. For him it did 'creatively determine all the rest.' It conditioned his literary life. For instance, it explains his late start. Until he was well over thirty he had written nothing that can be called his own. His most

productive years came after forty — strange phenomenon in a man with so much of the poet in him. Born in 1795 amid the echoes of the French Revolution, he was the exact contemporary of Keats, only three years younger than Shelley and seven years younger than Byron. Byron, Shelley and Keats were dead before he had done anything but translation. He was nearly forty when *Sartor* appeared. The reason for the delay was his long wrestle with his own mind: the slow and painful process of determining 'his vital relation to this mysterious Universe.' Once firmly grasped, his philosophy did not change; from start to finish it was the dominant factor in his experience. Common enough for a young man of parts to pass through a period of difficult mental self-mastery: in the normal case, however, the problem, once settled, tends to recur, if at all, only at moments of stress or crisis, when circumstances force the mind back to fundamentals. The crisis over, it is forgotten again. Not so with Carlyle. The outstanding features of his mental life are, first, that he did achieve not only a working solution of the problem, but certainty—a very different thing; and, second, that his certainty remained, from the time of its achievement to his death, perpetually in the front of his consciousness. It occupied his mind and never let go its hold. Nor did his con-

viction vary, once he was seized of it. The Carlyle who wrote *The Death of Goethe* (1828), *Characteristics* (1831), *Sartor Resartus* (1833), is the same Carlyle who wrote the *French Revolution* (1837), *Past and Present* (1843), *Oliver Cromwell* (1847), *Latter Day Pamphlets* (1850), and the *Life of John Sterling* (1851). Writing history or biography, reviewing a book, considering a great poet, denouncing a popular idol, or pondering on contemporary politics, he does it in the light of an idea, a general view. That general idea is the same through thirty years of continuous creative activity. He saw all that he looked on *sub specie aeternitatis*—and eternity never ceased to excite him. His style matures: the instrument becomes more cunningly adapted to its purpose, and, up to the end, shows small sign of the blunting that may come from perpetual use for a single task: but he did not begin to use it creatively until he had worked out what he thought once and for all. Whatever he was not, he was consistent. So consistent, indeed, that any writer of less dynamic force must have become a bore. He said the same thing over and over again, in different words and ways, and yet, as Emerson said, never wrote a dull line. His idea was part of him, but he never got used to it himself or allowed his readers to do so.

At the same time he was more interested in presenting his result than the process by which it had been reached. He told people that faith was infinitely important. They could see that he had a faith himself and that he lived by it. But he did not tell them, in so many words, or by orderly stages, how he had got there. For this there are two main reasons. First, he had an intense conviction of the individuality of experience. 'Who is this that knows the road I came?' There was one truth, but the roads to it were as various as the men who walked them. Second, he disliked going back over the stony track he had himself travelled or describing his wanderings in the wood of error, except figuratively—in some of the brightest pictures of darkness in literature. Why waste time on that when he could show the light he had found shining at the end, a light any man could see who would but open his eyes? In his Edinburgh days he had gone over the arguments again and again, till the taste of them was like sawdust to him and the analytic process gritty to his teeth. This unhappy memory perhaps plays its part in his constant tendency to elevate the unconscious above the conscious, and prefer the man who feels right over the man who laboriously works out a technique of right: a tendency decidedly perverse in an individual of such developed

self-consciousness. Here, as in his worship of Goethe, speaks the love of the not-self, of the thing you have not got, and for all your trying cannot achieve. What is Goethe's outstanding trait, the quality that 'separates' and makes him noble? Serenity. He was the man above the battlefield. He had been in it; intimate knowledge gave his calm its beauty. Of the calm of the man who has not been there Carlyle was impatient: of the man to whom 'the great mystery of existence is no mystery,' who is 'at ease in Zion.' Goethe was not like that. He had been down in the dust, the filth, the bloodshed, and understood. He had eaten the bread of sorrow and learned to know the Heavenly Powers in nights of darkness and weeping. He had come through, and his crown of thorns was become a crown of calm. Carlyle bowed his own head, proud but bleeding, before its effulgence. Patience, courage, fortitude he had; but to calm his temperament could not be subdued. So, too, when he looked at the simple and the unconscious soul he shrank as from profanation from analysis, from the effort to unpack its heart with words. In its speechlessness was something his words dared not try to reach.

Because he was little interested in retracing the stages and setting forth the elements in his

controlling philosophy, it does not follow that they cannot be traced, in substance, in his pages. If part of the reason for missing it is internal, a good part is external. The audience to which he spoke, in his own day, while unable to resist his dynamic impact and carried away by the sound of his voice, was, in important respects, less ready for the ideas behind it than we are. In 1877, when Morley wrote, Carlyle did seem pretty completely out of touch with the central stream of European thought and feeling, as then visible. In philosophy he was as far away from Hegelian Idealism as from scientific materialism; in politics, anathema to both Tories and Liberals. These were the great tides of the surface and made the characteristic movement of the Victorian sea. Underneath them, however, a transforming current was, in the 'forties, 'fifties and 'sixties, beginning to flow here, as well as in Europe, where its political surge was earlier felt. The theory of evolution, at first treated as the final proof of materialism, is now seen to be inconsistent with it; the doctrine of the conservation of energy, transferring emphasis from mass to energy, and transforming the atom into an organism, is compelling the re-admission into the world of science of elements and ideas complacently relegated to unreality by the mid-Victorian high priests. When Carlyle, in his

Journal in 1830, asks himself, 'A stone feels no pain — is that a fact?' he seemed to be raving. Not so in 1926. Of new political forces his prevision was even more remarkable. He thought in terms of society and co-operation in the hey-day of individualistic competition, when *Laissez faire* was the accepted creed of Radicals and the 'advanced.' More truly than Ruskin is he the parent of British Socialism and the forerunner of the Labour movement. All this made it wellnigh impossible for men steeped in an atmosphere he did not share to judge or appraise him. He has a dense atmosphere of his own, shot with light from a place to them invisible. That light gave him his philosophy, his science and his politics. Positively, as well as negatively, the extent to which he belongs to us made him an alien in his own day.

We are far less sure than was the generation to which he spoke that science has nothing to do with religion and reason nothing to do with emotion. Carlyle's emotion was, for them, a warning that he could not think. They dismissed him, as a poet. He was a poet; and, like Wordsworth and Shelley, had the poet's insight into the sum of things: like them he was put aside as a visionary. Thought was assumed to be a dry, compartmented process: 'sound' books must be dull. His beliefs excited him and his readers. He

was, therefore, suspect of intellectual looseness. His confident erection of a scale of values for which contemporary science found no place completed the demonstration. He despised the science to which 'the creation of the world is no more mysterious than the cooking of a dumpling' and entered, with schoolboy gusto, into a sort of slanging match, in which his rude remarks were taken solemnly, *au pied de la lettre*. They are very rude and at times very stupid; but if about fifty per cent. be allowed off, as it should, for his peculiar rather splayfooted humour, the fifty that remains is not more than was deserved by the arrogant omniscience of the science of his day. It seemed to him to reduce the universe and arbitrarily to contract the sphere of reason. Claiming to know everything it left out the thing most worth knowing — the soul of man.

A vivid apprehension of spiritual reality is the outstanding mark of his thought. Because of this he has been called a mystic; the implication being that his views were loose, unsystematised, and, in the last analysis, vague. Neither the attribution nor its implication can stand. Unless we are to call everyone who apprehends a non-material force or forces in the world a mystic, Carlyle was not one. Nor was he, in the strict sense, an idealist. He had an incomparably vivid sense of the actu-

ality of fact: spirit was real to him, but so was matter; both were solid. As David Masson puts it:

‘Actually, by the whole cast of his intellect, Carlyle was even the reverse of a mystic, constrained as he always was to definiteness of intellectual conception and to optical clearness of representation.’

His was a hard, rigorous mind, to which loose and floppy thinking was detestable. His faith has an outline and a form. It is no ‘Great Perhaps,’ or ‘larger hope’ ‘to be faintly trusted.’ In his life of John Sterling (whose hasty ordination he regards as the capital error of a lovable but hurried mind), he notes as the great sign of the darkness of the time that —

‘It is not now known, what never needed proof or statement before, that Religion is not a doubt: that it is a certainty—or else a mockery and a horror. That none or all of the many things we are in doubt about and need to have demonstrated and rendered probable, can by any alchemy be made a “Religion,” for us; but are and must continue a baleful, quiet or unquiet, Hypocrisy for us: and bring—

salvation, do we fancy? I think it is another thing they will bring and are, on all hands, visibly bringing, this good while!

His faith was a certainty. He could answer his own questions. He can answer ours. This applies both to his metaphysics and to his religion.

First, then, as to his metaphysics. The universe to him was an 'infinite universe,' and there was much about it we do not and cannot know. Throughout its diversity, in every part, known or unknown, knowable or unknowable, a principle of unity is operative, which is its soul. Enclosed as we are in time and space, our apprehension of that which is outside of them is imperfect; nevertheless, in the structure of our being and, to some extent, in the structure of all that is, an element resides corresponding to the soul of the whole, by which we know, feel and can believe in it.

“That the Thought Forms, Space and Time, wherein once for all, we are sent into this Earth to live, should condition and determine our whole Practical reasonings, conceptions, imaginings and imaginings—seems altogether fit, just and unavoidable. But that they should furthermore usurp such sway over pure spiritual meditation, and blind us to the wonder every-

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where lying close on us, seems nowise so. Admit Space and Time to their due rank as Forms of Thought; nay, even, if thou wilt, to their quite undue rank of Realities: and consider then, with thyself, how their thin disguises hide from us the brightest God-effulgences!'

Time and space are mental categories: they do not confine or control the eternal and infinite. It is bound by laws which we may, nay, must, apprehend and serve. Little as we may at any given moment perceive them through our senses, they govern our lives. More, there is something in us which knows them. It speaks as vision in the artist, as the instinct of worship or the prompting of conscience in the plain man. Its voice is truth. Mind, however, is not the sole reality. The world we see and feel is real. It is not created by our thinking. Both we and it are parts of a larger order, whose pattern, woven on a wider loom, conditions it and us, and is reflected in it and in us. The sense of reverence—deepest and purest movement of the mind of man—is his recognition of that larger order. True or right action corresponds in some degree to that larger pattern. The finite world of Space and Time is an imperfect expression of, and is interpenetrated by

light from, the infinite order which transcends it. Of that infinite order the animating principle is the creator and measure of our sense of right; and right is absolute. You may call this animating, co-ordinating, interpenetrating principle God; and he sometimes does; you may call it Love, Justice or Goodness. What you call it does not matter. What does matter is that you should accept and not reject the knowledge, embedded in the structure of your being, that it is there. To deny that is the sin against the Holy Ghost.

What he meant by God must be examined. Meantime, it is plain that what one might call this Realist Supernaturalism of his is far enough away from mysticism as generally understood. His soul has a body and that body is real; nor can it exist without a body. No diet for his robust mind in the rarefication of Transcendentalism.

‘Shrill, incorporeal, spirit-like. This New England business I rather liken to an unborn soul, that has got no body; not a pleasant neighbour either.’

As he wrote to Emerson in 1840:

‘And yet—you know me—for me it is too ethereal, speculative, theoretic: all theory becomes more and more confessedly inadequate,

untrue, unsatisfactory, almost a kind of mockery to me! I will have all things condense themselves, take shape and body, if they are to have my sympathy. I have a *body* myself; in the brown leaf, sport of the autumn winds, I find what mocks all prophesyings, even Hebrew onces — Royal Societies and Scientific Associations eating venison at Glasgow not once reckoned in!

The 'irreducible and stubborn facts' of which William James speaks, he accepted, even loved. For him, however, they were not the whole of experience; they had to be connected and related to the spiritual reality of which they were the vehicles. The thread that runs through all his work is the effort to fuse facts, honestly seen and weighed, into a coherent view of the universe and an intelligible theory of life. He had that 'vehement and passionate interest in the relation of general principles to irreducible and stubborn facts' which Professor Whitehead notes, in his illuminating *Science and the Modern World*, as giving the 'new tinge to modern minds.' It is, says Whitehead:

'This union of passionate interest in the detailed facts with equal devotion to abstract

generalisation which forms the novelty in our present society. Previously it had appeared sporadically and as if by chance.'

In Carlyle it appeared. It gives to his thought that 'consistency and decisive, intelligible result' which he found lacking in Emerson. Making him the odd man out among his contemporaries, it brings him nearer to the scientific attitude of our own day than any of them, both positively and negatively.

A main item in his charge against which he called the 'beaver' science of his day was that, claiming to know everything, it contracted the range and the wonder of the world, and so distorted truth. To quote Professor Whitehead again:

'The new power for scientific advance . . . transformed the middle period of the century into an orgy of scientific triumph. Clear-sighted men, of the sort who are so clearly wrong, now proclaimed that the secrets of the physical universe were finally disclosed.'

Carlyle was long-sighted, where these clear-eyed men were short-sighted. For him, as he says of Odin:

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'Nature was to this man what to the Thinker and Prophet it forever is, *preternatural*. This green, flowery, rock-built earth, the trees, the mountains, the great deep sea of azure that swims overhead; the winds sweeping through it; the black cloud fashioning itself together, now pouring out fire, now hail and rain; what *is* it? Ay, what. At bottom we do not yet know; we can never know at all. It is not by our superior insight that we escape the difficulty; it is by our superior levity, our inattention, our *want* of insight. It is by *not* thinking that we cease to wonder at it. Hardened round us, encasing wholly every notion we form, is a wrappage of traditions, hearsays, mere *words*. We call that fire of the black thundercloud "electricity," and lecture learnedly about it and grind the like of it out of glass and silk: but what *is* it? What made it? Whence comes it? Whither goes it? Science has done much for us, but it is a poor science that would hide from us the great deep sacred infinitude of Nescience, whither we can never penetrate, on which all science swims as a mere superficial film. This world, after all our science and sciences, is still a miracle; wonderful, inscrutable, *magical*, and more, to whosoever will *think* of it.

Modern science has given back the sense of wonder to the world of which mid-Victorian science deprived it; and, in its greater knowledge, can admit that there is much it does not know. Positively, too, it has moved along lines which bring it startlingly near to the view Carlyle expressed, in poetic form, both in the chapters in *Sartor* on 'Natural Supernaturalism' and 'Organic Filaments,' and in *Heroes*, as well as later. When we read:

'An individual entity, whose life history is a part within the life history of some larger, deeper, more complete pattern, is liable to have aspects of that larger pattern dominating its own being, and to experience modifications of that larger pattern reflected in itself as modifications of its own being. . . . According to this theory [that of Organic Mechanism] the evolution of laws of nature is concurrent with the evolution of enduring pattern,'¹

we are no longer very far from his metaphysic, least of all when that metaphysic is expressed in modern terminology. True, he speaks at times as though the enduring pattern which

¹*Science and the Modern World.*

he calls God were fixed; as if its eternity excluded modification and development and connoted permanence of form as well as of being; at others, however, he escapes from the rigid dogmatism belonging to his propaganda voice and sees that truth is a moving life, never to be captured or stated once for all. 'No truly great man, from Jesus Christ downwards, ever founded a sect — I mean wilfully intended founding one. What a view must a man have of the universe who thinks he can "swallow it all," who is not double and trebly happy that that he can keep it from swallowing him! . . . The old gloomy Gothic cathedrals were good, but the great Blue Dome that hangs over all is better than any Cologne one.'

The religion he derived from this metaphysic was a certainty of God. So it may be put most shortly. What he was certain of was the fact of a divine element at once inside and outside of the entire natural order, indestructible and eternal, though not to be localised or confined. Sure of divinity, he did not need either to personify it or to remove it to some lucent transparency. His God was not an old man with a beard. He inveighs passionately both against the distortion of the 'Jew God,' and against the impertinent familiarities employed by many ardent believers.

The 'very sight of a shovel hat' in some degree indisposed him to the wearer thereof, shut up his heart against him. About his own relation to orthodoxy he was perfectly frank. It is only by attending to words and disregarding ideas that anyone could be misled on this point. Brought up in an atmosphere impregnated with theological ideas and saturated with the Bible, which he knew from beginning to end and admired more than any other book, he constantly uses the old religious terminology. But in so far as being a Christian implies an acceptance of Christ's dogma as well as of his ethic, he was not a Christian, and left no one who knew him under any illusion on the point. He did not believe that at a certain specific moment in the history of man a ray of light from on high revealed the truth of the universe first to the Jews and then, later, in a particularly vivid form, through Christ, to Gentiles. He did not accept the dogmas of Original Sin and Redemption; he rejected the whole supernatural apparatus of orthodoxy. He saw the commandment, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' as the one true short statement of practical morality, of which, after nineteen centuries, we have hardly yet appreciated the meaning and not begun the application: but the Christian metaphysics he rejected. His detestation of Jews had an irrational

intemperance — if he had ever written *The Exodus from Houndsditch* it would have been a tremendous affair — but back of it was a recognition of the painful fact that the world lives by the Judaic rather than the Christian law. The behaviour of Christians, their denial of the spirit and assertion of the letter of Christ's teaching, was a thing he could not contemplate with equanimity. It undercut the basis of faith.

‘For the faith in an invisible unnameable, Godlike, present everywhere in all that we see and work and suffer, is the essence of all faith whatsoever; and that once denied, or, still worse, asserted with lips only and out of bound prayer-books only, what other thing remains believable?’

For those who travestied faith he had even less tolerance than for the unbeliever. The atheist saw no light: they saw and, in action, denied it. Not that tolerance in any form was by him admitted to be a virtue. He rejected it both in theory and practice. Particularly odious to him was the shilly-shallying half-heartedness of Puseyites, and the obscuratization of mind of those who tried to ‘reconcile’ belief and unbelief. For him religion was not a ‘comfort,’ but a terribly loud and in-

sistent call to action; not an escape from reality, but a function of seeing it. What appealed so deeply in Cromwell and his Puritans was their overpowering and constant sense of 'contact with God.' 'How the thing we hear every day like a mere sound, was to these men a fact.' It was a fact to Carlyle, and one that would not let him rest. The nature of the truth he saw made any form of quietism impossible.

'Thou art not alone, if thou have faith.' This cry—kernel as it is of his thinking and feeling—is not only a statement of deep if stern consolation; it is a ringing proclamation of responsibility. The soul of man is the warrant of the existence of God, and this soul knows no distinction of rank, class or creed. In every man it moves, however brokenly and obscurely: it is in him that we have contact with the divine.

'All men were made by God and have immortal souls in them. The Sanspotato is of the same stuff as the super finest Lord Lieutenant. Not an individual Sanspotato human scarecrow, but had a Life given him out of Heaven, with Eternities depending on it; for once and no second time. With Immensities in him, over him and round him; with feelings which a Shakespeare's speech would not utter;

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with desires illimitable as the Autocrat's of all the Russias.'

Indifference to our brothers; disregard of them: treatment of them merely as means for our selfish ends — these things are the practical denial of God. If 'there should one man die ignorant who is capable of knowledge'; if the divine spark in the dullest tenement of clay be extinguished by our action or inaction — we are personally guilty against God. It is not by muttering his name, but by behaviour to our fellows that we bear witness to him and further his purposes. Such witness — which must be practical, not an affair of words — is what we are here for; to neglect it is to stand with Judas. God's service, not our happiness, is the purpose of life. He had no patience with any individual claim to happiness.

'I asked myself: What is this that, ever since earliest years, thou hast been fretting and fuming and lamenting and self-tormenting, on account of? Say it in a word: is it because thou art not HAPPY? Because the THOU (sweet gentleman) is not sufficiently honoured, nourished, soft-bedded, and lovingly cared for? Foolish soul, what Act of Legislature was there that *thou* shouldst be happy? A little while

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ago thou hadst no right to *be* at all. What if thou wert born and predestined not to be Happy, but to be Unhappy! Art thou nothing other than a vulture, thus, that fliest through the universe seeking after somewhat to *eat*; and shrieking dolefully because carrion enough is not given thee?

‘. . . . Love not Pleasure, Love God. This is the Everlasting Yea. . . .’

About love he said less than most writers, but knew more. He knew that whether in relation to God or man it is at once the supreme exertion of will and the final achievement of a conquered will. He knew, too, that to love God through man, to love and serve the divine element in man is likely to appear both to the giver and the taker of such love as the sternest and cruellest of commandments. Love, whether of God or man, was not consummated in a rapturous moment of insight: it had to be realised, with infinite labour and patience, in the actual circumstances of day to day action. No merely contemplative faith meant anything. A faith that was real must, at whatever cost, incarnate itself: a man who saw God must fight, against whatever odds and through whatever obstacles, for his enthronement in the common life—in market place, country house, parlia-

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ment, workshop. To confine him to churches was to deny him. As he wrote to Gavan Duffy (in 1852):

‘There is no help: we must all get down to the *rocks*; we are in a place equivalent to Hell (for every true soul and interest) till we do get there: there, and there only, on the eternal basis, can there be any “Heaven” and Land of Promise for the sons of Adam (sons of Hudson, millionaire and penniless alike, I exclude). Thither must we, as God live — and God knows many of us will have a good bit to go before we arrive there and need considerable thrashing and tossing before the chaff be well beaten out of us, I guess. It is the dismalest epoch, and yet one of the grandest — like a putrid Golgotha with immortality beyond it; I do verily believe (in figurative language) comparable to resurrection from the dead.’

He meant this literally, and he applied it to the circumstances of his own time. His religion is the clue to his politics. The way to the immortality he saw beyond the ‘putrid Golgotha’ requires a separate chapter.

CHAPTER V

ARCH

‘As if in truth there were no God of Labour. . . .’

GREAT artists enlarge our conception of the universe and of the human soul. Make any criticism one likes on Carlyle — and no one presents a wider target — in this power he is one of them. In his company one is in the world of *Hamlet* and *Götterdämmerung*, *Faust* and the *Oresteia*, *The Madonna of the Rocks* and *The Night Watch*. It is a world suspended between eternities, ringed round with darkness, theatre, every hour, of a struggle desperate as any legendary strife of Gods and Titans. Great gales blow through his pages: impossible to read any of them and not feel the contracted walls confining one in the stuffy prison of self falling, while spaces, wide and terrifying, open round and arch overhead: spaces which he confronts, unafraid. Always present with him, never to leave him, is the sense of the preternatural element in the world of everyday. He never got used to the miracle of existence or lost awareness of the non-human forces that ring us round. ‘A world which, solid as it looks, is made all of aerial and even of spiritual stuff; permeated all by incalculable sleeping forces and electricities; and liable to go off, at

any time, into the hugest developments upon a scratch thoughtfully or thoughtlessly given on the right point.'

It is this, in the last resort, that makes him so uncomfortable a writer: uncomfortable, it may be, as Christ is, with his direct and simple demand of us to love our neighbour as ourselves: uncomfortable as in another and more obviously related way, Dostoevsky is. To Dostoevsky, indeed, he stands very near. Like him he is haunted by the vision of the arrogant pigmy confronting a universe he hardly begins to understand. Gleams of understanding come to the men he sees as heroes and, again and again, he reminds us that they are our bridge across the torrent and that we can save ourselves only by worshipping them: worshipping them 'first of all, by being ourselves of heroic mind.' Their heroism does, ours can, derive from facing reality as it is. Never must we look into any 'pint pot and see the world as the world is not.'

What is heroic in Carlyle himself is that seeing or trying with all the honesty in him to see the universe as it is, he nevertheless loves it and loves men. In his love there is no sentimentalism: he sees the follies and failings of his brothers: but what keeps him going is that he sees the other side too.

‘We demand arrestment of the knaves and dotards and begin by arresting our own poor selves out of that fraternity. There is no other reform conceivable. Thou and I, my friend, can in the most flunky world, make, each one of us, *one* non-flunky, one hero, if we like: that will be two heroes to begin with. Courage! Even that is a whole world of heroes to end with, or what we poor Two can do in furtherance thereof.’

His religion has a perpetual human reference. If he is an optimist it is because he saw in the structure of the mind an element—for him the constructive, creatively determinant element—which corresponded with and was derived from the principle animating the universe. ‘The great soul of the world is just.’ Justice does not reside apart, in icy withdrawal; it is operative in everything, contending everywhere against the evil that overlays, hides and strives to thwart it. If it can be made effective, man can pass out of the ‘putrid Golgotha’ in which in the first half of the nineteenth century he very evidently suffered, into an immortality ‘comparable to the resurrection of the dead.’ How is it to be made effective?

Carlyle’s answer to that question is a product of an inspection and arraignment of the society of his

day, seen in the light and shadow cast on it by his religion. As a youthful student in Edinburgh he had been shaken to the soul by the suffering, both moral and physical, he saw around him and by the practical denial of God in life. This sense of revolt grew stronger, rose to a white fire of passion as his sense of rejected truth defined and clarified itself into faith.

‘The world,’ he wrote in 1832, ‘grows to me ever more as a magic picture—a true supernatural revelation, infinitely stern, but also infinitely grand. Shall I ever succeed in copying a little therefrom?’ It was to that ‘copy’ he addressed his artistic power; to the awful contrast between the world as it ought to be and the world as it is. He looked at a society which believed itself to be happy, prosperous and successful, and was confident that it knew all that imported to be known. To him its prosperity was a sham, its success a mock, its ‘happiness’ swung above dark abysses of misery, and its complacent ignorance appalling. The few were stupefied by their riches; the many degraded by their poverty. Both were spiritually deaf and blind. Materialism—the worship of money which he calls Mammonism—was as self-confident and self-satisfied in the England of the nineteenth century as in the United States of the twentieth century. Dilettantism—the

contempt for work and profession of an 'elegant' culture at the expense of others—walked hand in hand with it, averting its eyes from the ugly facts on which its refinements were buttressed. Behind the glittering façade of Midas slavery existed in England. Men starved in England while horses were fed. That being so, he insisted to the last in being more interested in white slaves than in black or brown ones. But the gravamen of his case was that material poverty was accompanied by a spiritual destitution affecting the rich no less than the poor; and that both were products of a system of unbelief which created a world of rich and poor.

'We call it a society and go about professing openly the totalest separation, isolation. Our life is not a mutual helpfulness; but rather, cloaked under due laws-of-war, named "fair competition" and so forth, it is a mutual hostility . . . O sumptuous Merchant Prince, illustrious game-preserving Duke, is there no way of "killing" thy brother but Cain's rude way?'

The immense resources of nature, expanded by discovery, he saw wasted for lack of direction

and insight; of that true sense of values he calls Faith. Man, he cries in *Sartor*,

‘digs up certain black stones from the bosom of the earth and says to them: *Transport me and this luggage at the rate of five-and-thirty miles an hour*; and they do it: he collects, apparently by lot, six hundred and fifty-eight miscellaneous individuals and says to them, *Make this nation toil for us, bleed for us, hunger and sorrow and sin for us*; and they do it.’

He would have despaired altogether had he not perceived, working in the dark welter, an inarticulate soul, denied but not dead nor capable of being killed, that kept the whole alive. This soul, almost inoperative in and quite unperceived by the governing classes — whether game-preserving aristocracy, prosperous plutocracy, or laissez-faire Liberals — was obscurely active among the labourers and here and there in their captains. They demonstrated two practical truths, each having a fundamentally religious reference. First, that work was the essential activity: second, that work was a co-operative activity. These truths they proved in action. They were, he knew, far from understanding them in theory. To make

them understand is the substance of his social teaching.

When he surveys, in *Past and Present*, the England of his day, two centuries after the 'glorious Revolution,' and asks what of England's doings in these two centuries the law of nature had accepted, he finds that the 'spoken word of England has not been true'; it is 'her practical material work alone that England has to show for herself.'

'The grim inarticulate veracity of the English people, unable to speak its meaning in words, has turned itself silently on things; and the dark powers of material nature have answered. . . . The practical Labour of England is not a chimerical Triviality; it is a Fact, acknowledged by all the Worlds; which no man and no demon will contradict. It is, very audibly, though very inarticulately as yet, the one God's voice we have heard in these two atheistic centuries.'

But 'with our gross Atheism' we do not perceive that this silent work is the 'Voice of God to us.' Labour is feared, despised, oppressed and misinterpreted. Not work, but money, is valued. 'As if, in truth, there were no God of

Labour: as if god-like Labour and brutal Mammonism were convertible terms.'

'It is mournful enough for the present hour: were there not an endless hope in it withal.

'Giant Labour, truest Emblem there is of God the World worker, Demiurgus and Eternal Maker; Noble Labour, which is yet to be the King of this Earth, and sit on the highest throne—staggering hitherto like a blind irrational giant, hardly allowed to have his common place on the street pavements: idle Dilettantism, Dead Sea Apeism crying out, "Down with him: he is dangerous!" Labour must become a seeing rational Giant with a *soul* in the body of him, and take his place on the throne of things—leaving his Mammonism and several other adjuncts, on the lower steps of said throne.'

It is not surprising that Carlyle's attitude to work should have made a deeper notch in the contemporary mind than any other item in his teaching. Actually it is a revolutionary attitude; and its effects wait still to be worked out. The dominant view of work to-day, as when he wrote, is that it is an evil, though a necessary one: a primal curse. Success is still

measured popularly in terms of avoiding it. Incentives have to be elaborately devised to induce people to do it. His view is the opposite. The worker is the 'truest emblem of God'; work is the expression of his divinity. Every worker doing his work well — no matter what work it be — is a creative artist; the test of value is the spirit, not the material, of his labour. Work thus is service: service of God and service of man. When it is seen as service by the worker himself, then he too will 'leave his Mammonism and several other adjuncts,' and cease to be, as he so often is, a 'son of Hudson' — i.e., enslaved to the ruling Mammon-mentality of his time.

Nor is this all. Work is a dignity, and the one valid claim to respect. The worker is the servant of his fellows. That fact carries with it a recognition of society as a fellowship and of co-operation as the constructive and developing force in it. To this aspect of Carlyle's creed less than justice has been done. Yet he stated the social or community idea with the utmost explicitness. In society man first feels what he is. The solitary man is 'but a small portion of himself.' This applies to his thinking; it applies still more forcibly to his morals, so much so indeed that 'it is in society that morality begins.' The vital articulation of many individuals into a new col-

lective individual 'is far the most important of man's attainments' and gives value and meaning to all the rest. It is there, above all, that 'whatsoever of infinitude was in us bodies itself forth and becomes visible and active.' This view, constantly recurring in *Sartor*, reappears with a new and poignant emphasis in *Past and Present*, sounds in the *French Revolution*, and is still sounding, as a sort of growling undertone, in *Latter Day Pamphlets*. The passage in *Characteristics* deserves quotation entire:

'To understand man we must look beyond the individual man and his actions or interests, and view him in combination with his fellows. It is in Society that man first feels what he is, first becomes what he can be. In Society, an altogether new set of spiritual activities are evolved in him, and the old immeasurably quickened and strengthened. Society is the genial element wherein his nature first lives and grows; the solitary man were but a small portion of himself, and must continue, forever folded in, stunted and only half alive. "Already," says a deep thinker with more meaning than will disclose itself at once, "my opinion, my conviction gains *infinitely* in strength and sureness, the moment another has adopted it."

Such, even in its simplest form, is association: so wondrous the communion of soul with soul as directed to the mere act of knowing. In other, higher acts the wonder is still more manifest; as in that portion of our being which we name the Moral; for properly, indeed, all communion is of a moral sort, whereof such intellectual communion (in the act of knowing) is itself an example. But with regard to Morals strictly so-called, it is in Society, we might say, that morality begins; here at least it takes an altogether new form, and on every side, as in living growth, expands itself. The duties of man to himself, to what is Highest in himself, make but the First Table of the Law: to the First Table is now superadded a second, with the Duties of Man to his Neighbour; whereby also the significance of the First now assumes its true importance. Man has joined himself with Man; soul acts and re-acts on soul; a mystic, miraculous unfathomable union establishes itself; Life in all its elements has become intensated, consecrated. . . . The devout meditation of the isolated man, which flitted through his soul, like a transient tone of Love and Awe from unknown lands, acquires certainty, continuance, when it is shared in by his brother men. "When two or three are

gathered together," in the name of the Highest, then first does the Highest, as it is written, "appear among them to bless them"; then first does an Altar and act of united worship open a way from Earth to Heaven; whereon, were it but a simple Jacob's ladder, the Heavenly Messengers will travel, with glad tidings and unspeakable gifts for men. Such is *Society*, the vital articulation of many individuals into a new collective individual: greatly the most important of man's attainments on this earth; that in which, and by virtue of which, all his other attainments and attempts find their arena, and have their value. Considered well, Society is the standing wonder of our existence; a true region of the Supernatural; as it were, a second all-embracing Life, wherein our first individual life becomes doubly and trebly alive and whatever of infinitude was in us bodies itself forth, and becomes visible and active.'

Because he became, later, pre-eminently interested in showing men *how* to live in society — i.e., by understanding their work as service and accepting the leadership of the wiser, higher spirits among them, Carlyle often stresses this social fact, to him obvious, by inference rather

than by express statement. But to leave it out or fail to see it is to remove the thread on which his ideas are hung. On it they form a sequence, a pattern; the meaning of each single bead is governed by its place and its relation to the others. When they are scattered and isolated, their meaning is lost. His gospel of work, his canon of reverence for heroes, his belief in the ultimate victory of right, his conception of the justice of God, his criticism of democracy, his sense of brotherhood — take any one of these characteristic tenets in isolation, and one is bound to distort it; take them all together, each modifying and conditioning the others, and a general view emerges which, while singularly unlike what is commonly called ‘Carlyleism,’ is self-coherent, and surprisingly applicable to modern problems and conditions. Perhaps no single cause has contributed so much to misunderstanding as the dissociation to which his views have been subjected. The cardinal instance of this is the practical neglect of his social emphasis, though that social emphasis is the clearest and most direct expression of his ruling belief that religion governs not a part, but the whole of men’s life together.

True, he often forgets or forgets to mention it himself. He was a preacher, a propagandist,

and, as such, apt to mention the picturesque and contentious elements in his doctrine, to turn the strong light on the highly coloured beads in his chain—beads which, because of their colour and strangeness, hit the general eye, and blinded it, often, to the others. He liked contention; found amusement, as nearly every highly intellectual prophet has done, in shocking people of slower wit; and probably felt that such shocks were the only available instrument for breaking through the crust of habit. But, when one surveys his writings as a body, one is brought back to the social emphasis again and again. Almost unwillingly, this natural individualist, in whose bones works the belief that each man must pursue a solitary way to salvation, comprehensible by no other, is compelled to see social action and social idealism as the sole means for creating conditions such as can give to the individual a chance to act and the medium within which his thinking has got to operate, if it is to be true. When he thinks in terms of the community, he sees, and says, that the practical realisation of the fact of society, reflection on earth of our mutual relation to the infinite, is the one way out of the labyrinth.

So, to a generation that accepted 'some vague

janglement of Laissez faire, Supply and Demand, Cash Payment, the one nexus of man to man: Free Trade, Competition and Devil take the hindmost' as its Gospel, and later found a sort of intellectual and moral sanction for it in a crude interpretation of Darwinian Evolution, he thundered his doctrine of Brotherhood as the irrefutable moral and economic law. He may have spoken, in moments of justified irritation, of the 'few brave among the rotten multitudinous canaille'; and, here and now, felt like that. Who has not? Canaille, for him, existed in every class, and were terribly numerous in every class. His real mind speaks when he cries, 'In vain thou deniest it, thou art my Brother. Thy very hatred, thy very envy, those foolish lies thou tellest of me in thy splenetic humour: what is all this but an inverted sympathy? Were I a steam engine would'st thou take the trouble to tell lies of me? Not thou. I should grind all unheeded, whether badly or well.'

Men can no more dissociate themselves from one another than the present can from the past and from the future:

'You will find fibrous roots of this day's occurrences among the dust of Cadmus and Trismegistus, of Tubalcain and Triptolemus;

ARCH

the tap roots of them are with Father Adam himself and the cinders of Eve's first fire.'

The sense of living continuity in time and inescapable continuity, nay, comradeship, in society, is a major impulse in his historical writing. Dearly as he loves vital and salient individuals, and deep as is the reverence for the heroic that immerses him in biography, he never forgets that individuality can only be realised in society.

'Men cannot live isolated: we *are* all bound together for mutual good or else for mutual misery, as living nerves in the same body. No highest man can disunite himself from any lowest.'

His answer to the question, How is faith to be incorporated in life and made effective? is, then, By a recognition of the fact of society and of the religious character of work. In this he freed himself as completely from the reigning economics of the time as in his metaphysical thinking he freed himself from the reigning religious orthodoxies.

'The essence of all "religion" that was and

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that ever will be is to make men *free*. Who is he that, in this life-pilgrimage, will consecrate himself at all hazards to obey God and God's servants, and to disobey the Devil and his? With pious valour this free man walks through the roaring tumults, invincibly the way whither he is bound. To him in the waste Saharas, through the grim solitudes peopled by galvanised corpses and doleful creatures, there is a lode-star; and his path, whatever those of others be, is towards the Eternal. A man well worth consulting, and taking the vote of, about matters temporal.'

The last line gives the keynote. We shall get the visible world right when we *see* the invisible; to understand its pattern, its motive, its justice and its divinity gives us the rules on which we may organise our life—which is a common, not an isolated life—so that it is fruitful and can develop. On no other terms can we do it. When he commands the individual, 'Do the duty that lies nearest thee,' he means, 'Make your service of God, your awareness of him, operative in each action by doing it as well as it can be done.' He says the same to society. A society which is functioning properly, doing its work, will correspond to the infinite order, instead of

denying it. Denial, in practice, of the divinity of man was the great charge he brought against the society of his own day: and he tells it, in no uncertain terms, that in so doing it is denying God. Men who deny God cannot be free: refusal to see the facts is the sign of imprisonment. The sort of liberty that was being preached by Radicals and Liberals issued and was bound to issue in the chaos of disorder evident on all hands and in all relations. He believed in individuality. No man more so. It was too patent a fact for him to feel any need to emphasise its existence. But at a time when Individualism was running riot he saw that individuality can only be *generally* realised on social terms. An individualistic system allows freedom to some at the expense of others. Those who do achieve self-expression therein do so, however little they may realise it, through and in virtue of the fact of society. Denying it, they nevertheless profit by it — selfishly and at the price of common enslavement. General freedom, general individuality can be realised only when there is order. ‘Love of man cannot be bought by cash payment; and without love men cannot endure to be together. . . . Can you any more continue to lead a Working World unregimented, anarchic? I answer, and the Heavens and Earth are now answering, “No!” ’

Order, however, though important, is not enough. The principle of disorder, actually operative in the world, has got to be seen, and uprooted. Anarchy is the outward expression of a wrong motive that saps and poisons from within our common life and our separate souls. He calls forth and condemns that wrong motive again and again; nowhere more clearly than in the terrible pages, at the opening of *Past and Present*, which he calls 'Midas.' There, he definitely arraigns the love of money as the source of social evil. Falsely identified with pleasure, and even with happiness, it is the outward expression of inward indifference to God. It is everywhere: in the suburban villa, no less than in the palace of the merchant prince, or the elegant retreat of the connoisseur. It penetrates and rots action and thought. So long as we are subject to it, there is no health in us. It is the supreme sham, the supreme sin. Carlyle loved his prejudices as dearly as his best-founded convictions, and there is a great deal of sheer, ignorant prejudice in his denunciation of Jews. Something else, too, however. He saw the Jew, whether as the 'old clo' ' man trailing up from Houndsditch, or as the triumphant and self-satisfied millionaire, as the embodiment of the money motive and grand outward advertisement of the extent to which Old

Testament materialism dominated a world professing Christian idealism.

Work, therefore, is not advocated by him as an instrument of successful individual achievement, directed to the piling up of money. His gospel is not that of Samuel Smiles. It is, indeed, the very reverse of that. The worker's 'reward' is not the power to make more than his fellows, but the sense that, in working, he is realising both his manhood, his brotherhood, and his sonship of God. When he appeals to the captain of industry to 'see to it that his gallant work-hosts' are joined to him 'in veritable brotherhood,' by 'quite other and deeper ties than those of temporary day's wages,' he commends this, not as a means to 'efficiency in production,' but as a means to realising the social and religious implications of work, on whose basis alone a true society can be built.

He saw whence the driving force must come on which the achievement of such a society depends. He calls for a 'noble Chivalry of work, and laws and fixed rules which follow out of that—far nobler than any chivalry of fighting was': an army united in brotherhood, freed from the isolation which is 'sum total of wretchedness to man'; and cries:

‘Awake, ye noble Workers, warriors in the one true war: all this must be remedied. It is you who are already half-alive whom I will welcome into life; whom I will conjure, in God’s name, to shake off your enchanted sleep, and live wholly! Cease to count scalps, gold purses; not in these lies your or our salvation. . . . It is to you I call; for ye are not dead, ye are already half alive: there is in you a sleepless, dauntless, energy, the prime matter of all nobleness in man. Honour to you in your kind. It is to you I call: ye know at least this: that the mandate of God to His creature man is: Work! The future epic of the world rests not with those who are near dead, but with those that are alive, and those that are coming into life.’

True, this appeal is specifically addressed to the ‘Captains of Industry,’ a phrase of his own coinage: but wording and context alike show that it refers to all who have a true view of work; who do it, and respect it. It unites in one army the brain worker and the hand worker and sets them against the Mammon-worshipper and the Dilettante, against ‘Hudson’ and ‘Hesperus Fiddle-de-dee.’ His respect for the candid brain

worker needs no emphasis. Free and honest thought is, for him, the root of every virtue. 'How have we to regret not only that men have "no religion," but that they have next to no reflection!' Honesty is, in the last resort, a function of the intellect which is character. 'Was there,' he writes to John Sterling, 'or will there be a great intellect without a true and great heart to begin with? Never. . . . Fear no seeing man, therefore; know that he is in heaven, whoever else be not; that the arch-enemy, as I say, is the arch-stupid. I call this my fortieth Church article, which absorbs into and covers up in silence all the other thirty-nine.'

Consistency in detail and in phrase is not a virtue that anyone could claim for him. He quite failed to see the relevance of his own doctrine, when confronted with the typical intellectual workers of his time — scientist and logician. Then he rates with an uncultured boorishness, in which there is a strong admixture of sheer stupidity. For his Philistine attitude to the arts there is a less discreditable explanation, though it will not cover some odd freaks of intolerance, only to be attributed to the special shape of his own eyes and ears. A man of his type could not *see* Keats, or be just to Shelley. His misdemeanours are glaring:

no one can miss them. But if the list of artists about whom he was wrong is long, so is that of those about whom he was right. He had a swift response to the large, generous movement of the artist's mind that makes him what he calls a priest: his words on Dante, Goethe, Milton, Shakespeare, Johnson and Burns are as great as their subjects. But from 'pure aesthetics' his indefatigable moral sense revolted. Keats seemed to him a 'luxury' artist. He rejected, as William Morris was later to reject, a view of art which made it a mere ornament on the life of the few. Art, then, as now, in the hands of many of those who admired, and some who practised it, served as a screen against the reality of life and an excuse for taking no interest in its evils. Here his pervasive social sense came in again: luxury-art offended, not his Puritan, but his social conscience.

In this he was consistent. Telling other people to stick to their work, he stuck to his own. This is a point that needs to be kept in mind when one feels an inclination rising to criticise him for staying outside the dust of the arena of practical politics. He lost something thereby, no doubt. The harsh test of practical application, the grim responsibility that has to be shouldered by the

man who acts his politics, the knowledge, extensively acquired, of the long gap between seeing and doing, above all when he has to force his sight through other people's doing—an acquaintance with these things gives a special edge to the sword of the political and social thinker who takes part in the circumstances he seeks to transform. At a price, however. What is gained in sharpness is lost in depth of thrust. No one knew better than Carlyle that you cannot have it both ways. Choice is necessary and involves sacrifice. It must be made, and admitted. 'You will find,' he writes in a late letter, 'what does in verity seem your chief good and then adhere to that; sacrificing whatever must be sacrificed to it; *not* expecting that you can keep both the merchandise and the price.' Having chosen his work and equipped himself for it by rigorous training, kept up to the end, he did not swerve off into a sideline, or think that because he was competent at his own job he was therefore competent at any and every job. The equipment for the political thinker is not the same as that for the political actor. Take a comparison, here, that at first sight seems all against him—that with William Morris. Impossible not to feel a glow of affectionate admiration for the sensitive conscience which made

Morris feel he must take a yeoman's part in the struggle to secure social justice; equally impossible not to have that admiration checked on reflection by a regret that Morris, who knew so well what the craftsman is and what the amateur in the arts of which he was a master, should have shown so naïve a contempt for the craft of politics. To design a wallpaper or curtain he thought it necessary to learn all about dyes and dyeing: for the technique of Socialist propaganda he thought no preparation required. 'Morris,' Bernard Shaw told Graham Wallas at the time, 'has come into this movement with all his energy, but not with all his intellect.'¹ Carlyle, sticking to his last, doing as well as he knew how the work which only he could do, was, in the last analysis, the better Socialist. If we raise our hats to the impatience of Morris's convictions, we ought to lift them as high and perhaps hold them lifted longer to the patience of Carlyle's. Is not that patience the function of a larger faith?

He believed he held the clue to lead men out of the blind maze in which they wandered enchanted, but he had no illusions as to the length or hardship of the way they had to tread. He had no 'Morrison's Pill.' About this he is frank: he

¹ *The Art of Thought*. Graham Wallas.

meets, not once, but many times, the complaint since so often levelled at him, that he had no clear remedial prescription to hand out.

‘How is it to be cured? Brothers, I am sorry I have got no Morrison’s Pill for curing the maladies of Society. It were infinitely handier if we had a Morrison’s Pill, Act of Parliament, or remedial measure which men could swallow, one good time, and then go on in their old courses, cleared from all miseries and mischiefs! Unluckily we have none such; unluckily the Heavens themselves, in their rich pharmacopœia, contain none such. There will no “thing” be done that will cure you. There will a radical universal alteration of your regimen and way of life take place; there will a most agonising divorce between you and your chimeras, luxuries and falsities, take place; a most tiresome, all but “impossible” return to Nature, and her veracities and her integrities, take place; that so the inner fountains of life may begin again, like Eternal Light fountains, to irradiate and purify your bloated, swollen, foul existence, drawing nigh, as at present, to nameless death! Either death or else all this will take place. Judge if, with such diagnosis,

any Morrison's Pill is like to be discoverable!'

He does not exaggerate when he speaks of the 'agonising divorce' that will have to take place between us and our 'chimeras, luxuries and falsities.' He knew and respected the workers and his knowledge was no hearsay. He knew their virtues. He also knew their defects. Labour must leave its 'Mammonism' before it could 'ascend the throne'; leave the thoughts and desires which it took from the surroundings in which it lived; and work out a new social standard of values. Sentimental or romantic illusions, any Rousseauish notion of a 'return to nature' in the crude sense, or of the wisdom or virtue of the poor simply because they were poor, he dismissed. At the same time he held firmly to the substantial fact—the workers, because they did work, were in contact with fundamental verities, and had something of infinite worth to contribute which must be organised, respected and, above all, understood.

Injustice is done to him when he is praised merely for his insight into prevalent social error and evil. For instance, when G. K. Chesterton says,

‘It is his real glory that he was the first to see clearly and say plainly the great truth of our time; that the wealth of the State is not the prosperity of the people,’¹

he covers only part of the truth. Admirably just to Carlyle’s negative contribution, he is less than just to his positive one. He not only showed his generation where and how they were wrong, but where and how they could be right. He applied his faith to the facts, and in its light worked out a social philosophy. Let anyone, to-day, take down *Past and Present*, and read the books entitled ‘Horoscope’ and ‘The Modern Worker.’ Before he has turned many pages he will look for the date of publication and stare at it with sensations compounded of wonder and despair. Much there, strange and revolutionary in 1843, now wins the assent of great numbers of people. Assent? yes; action? no. Our ‘words go up, our thoughts remain below.’ The thrilling and various tones of his great orchestra, its harmonies crossed by discords exciting as those of the most modern composer, have been pouring over us now for more than three-quarters of a century. For three-quarters of a century it has been before us,

¹*The Victorian Age in Literature.*

his tone picture of the world as he saw it, and as, in substance and in structure, it still is; and, playing over its sky, the thunder of his indignation and the lightning flash of his vision of the soul that might save and recreate. Conditions have changed: the background of material prosperity he describes is that, to-day, of the United States rather than of Europe; but the evil is still here.

To some extent, we have taken his negatives; little, however, have we yet understood, far less acted upon, his positives. Yet these positives are the vital part of him. They were, for him; but, working, as he did, in a world dominated by alien ideas and an alien spirit, he had to clear a way for them; break through walls of obstruction; use the battering ram before the spade. So, his indignant denunciation resounds, echoing and re-echoing from the walls of fallacy which seemed to be closing down on the society he lived in. He broke them. The smug Manchesterism he hated, the materialism in philosophy and Devil-take-the-hindmost in economics and in politics, like the thin and chilly sentimentalism that evaded instead of attacking hard and narrow conceptions that were visibly making men into apes — they fell before his assault. He survives. His ideas are in the line of the constructive political thought of to-day. An

unprejudiced mind that goes to him will find meat and drink—strong meat and strong drink: no vegetarian mess of pottage—and, if it can masticate and digest, a fortifying nourishment for brave and patient faith.

CHAPTER VI

DEMOCRACY

‘Oh, brother, we know but imperfectly yet, after ages of constitutional government, what liberty and slavery are.’

NINE-TENTHS of the offence caused by Carlyle to the ‘advanced’ people of his own day, as of ours, is due to his views on democracy. ‘Twenty-seven millions, mostly fools’—no remark of his has been so widely quoted. Let it be quoted: is it not true? Has its truth been greatly altered by the increase from twenty-seven to forty-seven millions? For him it was a fact, and as such to be faced. A fact—not a principle. Here is the root of misunderstanding, as so often. He would mention facts as he saw them, however inconvenient. In his view it was on facts alone that a valid theory of life, whether individual or social, and of action, whether personal or political, could be based. Average human stupidity was a fact. It was not the only fact; that the average human had a soul was another, at least as important; but, for what it was worth, it had to be stated not slurred. When he declared that ‘I am not a Tory, ah, no; but one of the deepest though perhaps the quietest of all the Radicals now extant in the world; a thing productive of small

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comfort to several persons,' he knew what he was talking about. Small comfort indeed is to be derived by any hurried mind from his thorough-going analysis, insistent on seeing difficulties it is pleasant to overlook; but a reader who will imitate his patience will emerge with something better than a catchword.

To-day, whether openly or secretly, numbers of people are 'disappointed' with democracy and critical of the parliamentary institutions through which it is operated. Their disappointment in nine cases out of ten varies in direct ratio to their expectation and in inverse ratio to their understanding of it. Democracy, like the franchise, through which it is expressed, is an instrument, not a solution. It is a method of securing operative force for the popular will. The result will vary with the character of that will: in other words, with the ideas and ideals, the intelligence and education of the electorate. Carlyle saw this, and, at a time when 'reform' and the ballot box were regarded as panaceas, said it. His criticism was not merely the formal one that the Acts of 1832 and 1867 had not secured complete representation, nor even the more thorough-going one that the first stone on which a democratic structure might be raised was not laid: there was no general Education Act till

1870 and it was far from complete. He went further. Unless men had in their minds a true pattern of the society they strove to realise they could not achieve anything. Without religion, in his sense, as the content and spirit behind government, no form or kind of government could take them anywhere worth going to. 'Nations and men that cannot understand Heaven's message because (which very often happens) it is not agreeable to them—alas! the sum of all their national and human sins lie there, and our frightful doom "is to follow the message of the *other* place then." '

His Radicalism thus went further and deeper than that of the Radicals. He did desire a radical change—a change of spirit, to find its expression in social, industrial and political institutions; but he was under no illusion as to its having occurred. Neither the Reform Act, the Repeal of the Corn Laws nor the Ballot Act made him throw up his hat and cry 'Lo! We have arrived.' The exaggerated estimate put on these measures often, indeed, made him speak of them with scorn. They were palliatives—good as far as they went, but positively bad if assumed to represent constructive achievement. His very clarity of grasp of the right principle as he saw it, with the fact that it sounded in his ears not as any poor induc-

tion of his own, but as a message from Heaven, made him speak at times with impatience, at others with angry despair, of well-intentioned but, by definition, quite useless expedients. His criticism of democracy is thus, largely, a criticism of those who expected from it something it could only give when it was, as in his time it was not, the vehicle and medium of a spirit of worship and fellowship.

Pæans to the mere fact of democracy, as it existed, seemed to him ridiculous. It was there. It had the authority of the actual. Applause and threnodies were vain breath. What was needed was resolute and disinterested thinking on the question: How the fact was to be worked so that it might be a blessing and not a curse. The rule of the many was an accomplished event. 'If once Printing have grown to be as talk then *Democracy* (if we look into the roots of things) is not a bugbear and a probability, but a certainty, an event as good as come.' So he wrote in 1838 when his convictions had fully crystallised and, the *French Revolution* behind him, his mind was beginning to work on Cromwell. 'A man's a man for a' that' was, to him, almost a platitude. To make a shibboleth of it was quite another matter. That he entirely refused to do. To him, democracy was no solemn 'Open Sesame!' that, murmured,

opened all doors and solved all riddles. Like other facts it was good or evil as men worked it. His notion of working it was miles away from that of his friend, J. S. Mill.

‘And yet all men can see, whose sight is good for much, that in democracy can be no finality; that with the completest winning of democracy there is nothing yet won — except emptiness and the chance to win!’

The idea of democracy with which he was presented by Mill and the Radicals of his time was an arithmetical one: the problem as they saw it was no more profound than that of securing an ‘accurate’ register of popular opinion by the devising of a perfect system of recording and counting votes. For all this Carlyle had a contempt. Proportional representation was the apotheosis of the mechanical view he detested and rejected: by a natural enough transition, the ballot box, mystic emblem of the Liberals, became, for him, a symbol of darkness of mind: of blindness to the dynamic forces in social life, which eluded and must elude the mathematical calculator with his adding machine.

Many of the arguments adduced in favour of universal suffrage represented nothing to him

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but the deplorable desire to shuffle out of responsibility. Ears to the ground for the echoing hoofs of the multitude were no substitute for individual thinking. No man was entitled to put his judgment or his conscience to bed, while heads were counted. Least of all the man of some training and wisdom. He was, in so doing, shirking his plain duty. More than that, he was making a mock of the idea in which he professed to believe. The popular will could only have validity as, and in so far as, it expressed the truth that slumbered, like unawakened thoughts, in the tissue of the mind of every man: the soul that dreamed under his stupidity. In enlightened men these thoughts had risen nearer to the surface of consciousness: it was incumbent upon them to utter and to teach them. Their voice would then rouse an echo in the general mind and call what slept there into wakefulness. So, a true general will would be called out. He sought for that, while the arithmeticians were working for a mere lowest common denominator.

To say this is to say that he faced the root problem that democracy presents—leadership. Society for him was organic. The impulses that came from the whole body must be translated and directed by the head: in other words, by those men in society who, being consciously aware of truth,

could guide its actions and movements into correspondence with it.

In seeing the problem of leadership as central in democracy, he anticipated, by nearly half a century, a position at which we are slowly arriving. Before interrogating his contribution to it, it will be well to establish, if possible, the preliminary proposition that he did accept democracy, and in particular its fundamental emphasis on equality. That the younger Carlyle did so is not doubted or open to doubt. 'Twenty-four million labouring men,' he cries in *Chartism*, will, if their affairs remain 'unregulated, chaotic' reduce themselves and world to ashes and ruin. 'What intellect were able to regulate them? The intellect of a Bacon, the energy of a Luther' alone, or added together, to be perpetual Prime Minister, could not do it. What can?

'Only twenty-four million ordinary intellects, once awakened into action; these, well presided over, may . . . These twenty-four million intellects are but common intellects; in earnest about the matter, instructed each about his own province of it; labouring each perpetually with what partial light can be obtained, to bring such province into rationality.'

This is plain enough. What, however, of the older Carlyle? The Carlyle of *Frederick*, *Latter Day Pamphlets* and *Shooting Niagara*?

In *Frederick*, written between 1859 and 1865, he seldom speaks in his own voice. For that reason mainly this marvellously organised narrative remains the least attractive of his works. It is heroically objective. Intractable material is subdued and submits to significant modelling: the story marches with a grand though muffled tune. It is a masterpiece of what Mill called 'the second best way of writing history,'—the re-creation of the life of the past. If it has worn less well than *Cromwell* or the *Revolution* it is because, as its author felt, neither the central figure nor any but one or two of the subsidiary ones stirs the nerves of strong feeling. Not all his genius can make this a heroic period in his own sense. Passages there are, however, which belong to Carlyle's deeper, continuous thought. Thus, apropos of the war of Jenkin's Ear, he writes,

'And it is curious to consider how, with what fierce deep breathed doggedness the English nation, drawn by their instincts, held fast upon it, and would take no denial, as if they had surmised and seen. For the instincts

of simple guileless persons (liable to be counted stupid by the unwary) are sometimes of prophetic nature, and spring from the deep places of the Universe!’

Here is the same music as that sounding through the noble chapter on ‘The English’ in *Past and Present*.

In *Shooting Niagara*, written in 1867, every fault of screaming over-emphasis is at its worst. Spleen rather than wisdom characterises it. Even here, however, the old faith is not wholly overclouded. Crossing the pleas for dictatorship and drill, is a final desperate appeal to the ‘aristocracy by title or by *nature*’ to take advantage of the ‘power of being educated’ there is in the people. On the whole, however, one may hand this essay over to the enemy as a tragic proof that no one can so fatally caricature and distort a teacher as himself.

In *Latter Day Pamphlets*, written in 1849, and appearing through 1850 in monthly instalments, he addresses himself directly to the question of the government of England, and what is wrong with it. He starts in full tilt against ‘insufficiency of intellect—that sad insufficiency from which, directly or indirectly, all evil whatsoever springs.’ Darkness of mind ‘abounds.’ Of that darkness

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‘every *Sin* is a source and probably self-conceit the chief source.’ ‘Of all the kinds of darkness, surely the Pedant darkness, which asserts and believes itself to be *light*, is the most formidable to mankind. For Empires or for individuals there is but one class of man to be trembled at; and that is the stupid class, the class that cannot see, who alas are they mainly that will not see.’ The Reform Bill, from which so much was hoped, has not produced ‘seeing men’ to govern us. In Downing Street is only ‘a Pilot with no *eyes* but a pair of glass ones got from the constitutional optician,’ who must ‘steer by the ear, rather than by the eye; by the shoutings he catches from the shore, or from the Parliamentary benches nearer hand’; and this although ‘in every ship there must be a *seeing* Pilot.’ How is such to be found, and a crew competent to man and run Downing Street? It is not that such men do not exist:

‘In the lowest broad strata of the population, equally as in the highest and narrowest, are produced men of every kind of genius; man for man, your chance of genius is as good among the millions as among the units; and class for class, what must it be?’

The ‘lowest broad strata’ must contain a larger

number of able men: why are they not sought out, when we so need them?

‘Is not this proposal the very essence of whatever truth there is in democracy? this that the able man be chosen, in whatever rank he be found? That he be searched for, as hidden treasure is; be trained, supervised, set to the work which he alone is fit for. All democracy lies in this . . . that the Noble Soul, born poor, should . . . be set to assist in governing men; this is our grand democratic interest. With this we can be saved.

‘Let us brush the cobwebs from our eyes; Let us bid the inane traditions be silent for a moment; and ask ourselves, like men dreadfully intent on having it *done*, “By what method or methods can the able man from every rank in life be gathered, as diamond grains from the general mass of land: the able men, not the sham-able;—and set to do the work of governing, contriving, administering and guiding for us?” This is the question of questions. All that democracy ever meant lies there: the attainment of a truer and truer *Aristocracy*, or Government again by the Best.’

Clear enough from this, and from other pass-

ages in the same chapter, that the aristocracy he has in mind is to be based not on birth but on capacity: that the road to it is to be open to all: that class barriers are to be levelled, and men capable of government sought out, regard being had to no extrinsic quality, and educated. The 'inane traditions' are to go. 'Tools to him who can handle them' reappears in a new form. Moreover, the revolutionary doctrine of work comes in again, with determinant emphasis. One point, in particular, requires to be underlined. Equality does not mean what Mr. Lowes Dickinson once wittily called 'indistinction,' or a slipshod identification of different things or services. It does not mean, in relation to a given task, that any man is as good as any other. It means, indeed, the reverse of that. It means the most precise fitting of men to tasks, in order that the worth each possesses for some defined kind of work may have its chance to express itself in service. Determination in advance, on class lines, that certain opportunities are reserved to certain groups, spells inefficiency: there must be the widest and freest selection and adjustment of quality to task. An advance social classification of tasks, in the sense of a judgment that some are worthy and distinguished, others low and contemptible, is as certain a road to inefficiency as an advance classification of men. What

makes a given task worthy and distinguished is the spirit and excellence of its performance, and vice versa. Intrinsically, *all* work is noble. Special aptitudes are required by each kind, and the nicest adjustment of men to tasks is indispensable in an effective common effort. Government by the 'Best' means government by the men best fitted for the specific task of government. If we like we may call it 'highest,' but such an implied scale needs constantly to be checked by a recollection that as vital and honourable a service is being rendered by the road-mender or dust sweeper who does his work as well as it can be done. An efficient and conscientious dustman is, indeed, a better social servant than an incompetent and casual Cabinet Minister.

Though the word service hardly occurs, the idea interpenetrates everything Carlyle wrote, from the striking passage in the *Reminiscences* of his father (written in 1832) onwards, through all the innumerable expositions of its theory of work:

'Though from the heart and practically even more than in words an independent man, he was by no means an insubordinate one. His bearing towards his superiors I consider noteworthy, of a piece with himself . . .

Even for the mere clothes screens of rank, my Father certified no contempt: he spoke of them in public or private without acerbity; testified for them the outward deference which custom and convenience prescribed, and felt no degradation therein: their inward claim to regard was a thing that concerned them, not him.'

The spirit of service, which is the spirit of craftsmanship, sweeps aside every honorific classification, and, above all, the notion that there is anything degrading or lessening to man's dignity in accepting the direction, serving under the guidance of another man who has special qualifications for that work. To serve is to be free—to be free, *inter alia*, from snobbishness. Men vary in capacity. Their variety makes a series, and that series corresponds to the series of tasks needing to be performed. Differences are real and precious. A uniform society would be a hideous affair. Excellence in the work which fits him is open to every man, and authentic dignity in doing it. Nothing of that dignity, or of freedom, is lost in recognising that among the various works to be done in a community is the work—for which some are gifted, others not—of leadership. To obey is a service as difficult and as distinguished as to command. An army contains

soldiers as well as captains; its effectiveness is the product of the co-operation between them; to attempt to decide whose contribution is more important is like trying to decide which blade of the scissors does the cutting.

Democracy, thus based upon equality, is no automatic toy. Work requires to be organised. Gavan Duffy, in his *Conversations with Carlyle*, gives a specimen of the sort of 'harangue' which he used to address to the American visitors who, in the later years of his life, flocked to Cheyne Row to see the Sage with their own eyes. In it the following passage occurs:

'Organisation was the essential basis of success, and he believed every trade must finally get itself organised as much as it could, even the trade of authorship, so that each man might be put to the work he was best fitted to do, and not let wasting his strength and spirit in a totally useless direction. If a wise scheme like this were opposed—as indeed it was sure to be—one might rely on the sense of the community for maintaining it. If the Ministry of the day set themselves against it, men of sense would say to them: Get out of that, you ugly and foolish windbags.'

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This emphasis on organisation is worked out in *Latter Day Pamphlets*, notably in the section called 'The New Downing Street.' There a view of the function and activity of the State is advanced that horrified individualistic Liberals. In England alone of European countries, 'the State yet survives: and might help itself by better methods.' It has 'the largest mass of living interests ever entrusted to a nation.' These it neglects while 'clutching blindly to its venerable extinct and imaginary interests.'

'Huge inorganic England, well nigh choked under the exuviae of a thousand years, and blindly sprawling amid chartisms, ballot boxes, prevenient graces and bishops' nightmares, must, as the preliminary and commencement of organisation, learn to *breathe* again—get lungs for herself again.'

The plan of the new Downing Street, which is to make use of the services of men of mind from all classes, requires architects. 'Let not editors and remote unprofessional persons interfere too much.' It has work to do. It is not there, as it seems to assume, merely to 'keep the peace.' Its functions are active, not passive, and 'very different indeed from what it had long supposed

them.' He has no use for the current Tory and Liberal notion that the State is there merely to 'hold the ring.' On the contrary he declares with emphasis:

'The *State is a reality and not a Dramaturgy*; it exists here to render existence possible, existence desirable and noble for the State's subjects.'

If the State continues to neglect this, its plain duty, it becomes a question whether the new era, that must be reached, can be reached peacefully and 'on dry land.' 'Suspended animation' on the part of the State threatens to carry Britain over into anarchy. Quite plainly and definitely, here, as in *Chartism, Past and Present*, as well as in many passages in his other works, he attributes responsibility for 'disorder' to the State. Its blindness to its 'plain duty' is, for him, the cause of phenomena, like the Luddites, the Chartists, and 'insurrectionary' movements in the big industrial areas, which threw many of his contemporaries into reactionary panic. In so many words, he tells them that Revolution may be brought about here, as it has been brought about elsewhere, not by the will of the oppressed and disinherited, but by want of conscience, refusal

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to face facts, failure in obvious duty, on the part of public men and public authorities. Historically, revolution has come about, not by any choice of those who happen to lead it, but as a result of the obstinate stupidity of Governments who are blind to reality, block the fated course of social development, and sit upon the safety valves by repression. At a time of wide-spread social misery, merely to do nothing is a failure on the part of a State which will be punished. Protracted failure by the State may force revolt on peoples; if it does, the cause is with the State which has not done its duty.

As to what that duty is, he is, again, explicit:

‘The British Home Office and its kindred offices exist, if they will think of it, that life and work may continue possible, and may not become impossible for British men.’

Life and work were impossible for millions of British men when he wrote; pauperism was then the eloquent index of State failure, as unemployment is to-day. What he says of pauperism in 1850, he would say, in 1926, of unemployment. For him, the ‘Cloaca of pauperism’ is a summons to State action. Pauperism ‘is the general leakage through every joint of the ship that is rotten.’

‘We may depend upon it, where there is a pauper there is a sin; to make one pauper there go many sins. Pauperism is our social sin grown manifest, developed from the state of spiritual ignobleness, or practical impropriety and base oblivion of duty, to an affair, of the ledger. . . . Pauperism is the poisonous dripping from all the sins, and putrid inveracities and God-forgetting greedinesses and devil-serving cants and jesuitisms, that exist among us. . . . On that problem we shall find that innumerable things, that all things whatsoever, hang. By courageous, steadfast persistence in that, I can foresee Society itself regenerated. In the course of long strenuous centuries I can see the State become what it is actually bound to be, the keystone of a most real “organisation of Labour” and on this earth a world of some veracity and some heroism, once more worth living in.’

This is a key passage and deserves closest attention. Once see poverty, destitution, pauperism, as he did, not as product of individual incompetency but of social incompetency, as ‘our social sin made manifest,’ and you are started on a path that leads straight to Socialism. ‘On that problem . . . all things hang.’ They do, indeed.

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In this as in so much else well nigh unique in his generation, Carlyle was not afraid of order and organisation. He rather loved to shock and alarm the friends who quailed before labels by calling it 'regimentation' or 'despotism.' Much in the famous Report of the 1834 Poor Law Commissioners seemed to him abominable: it was a law for the poor laid down by the rich; but he welcomed it as the beginning of supervisal by the central government: a small step towards order, and away from *Laissez-faire* of which, indeed, it was the suicide. To clean out the 'Cloaca of Pauperism' 'not misgovernment, nor yet no-government; only government will now serve.' *Laissez-faire* meant not freedom, but slavery for the mass of men; meant, as he had already shown in his *Chartism*, pauperism and the 'unendurable conviction that they are not fairly dealt with.' Disorder spelt injustice: and the real smart of injustice was 'the soul's pain and stigma, the hurt inflicted on the moral self.' 'No man can bear or ought to bear' injustice. What had happened in France was the writing on the wall.

'For, alas, on us, too, the rude truth has come home. Wrappages and speciosities all worn off, the haggard naked fact speaks to us:

Are these millions taught? Are these millions guided?’

Wealth abounds. We have a church and an aristocracy. They answer ‘Surely the people are taught and guided.’

‘Do we not pass what Acts of Parliament are needful; as many as thirty-nine for the shooting of the partridge alone? Are there not treadmills, gibbets; even hospitals, poor rates, New Poor Law? So answers Church; so answers Aristocracy, astonishment in every feature. Fact, in the meantime, takes his knife box, sets fire to wheat stacks; sheds an all too dismal light on several things. Fact searches for his third rate potato, not in the meekest humour, six and thirty weeks each year; and does not find it.’

The fact of a poverty so dire as to amount to pauperism in the case of three millions of people existing and even growing in the midst of piled-up wealth, forced him, step by step, to work out a scheme of organisation both in plan and in underlying impulse indistinguishable from State Socialism. In this he was following out the application of his faith to social life, following what he saw as truth, whether ‘agreeable’ to himself

and his prejudices, or to those of others or no. Accused of vagueness and inconsistency by critics who never succeeded in starting from a point of view near enough to his to permit them to see it, he is, in fact, one of the most consistent of thinkers. A strong thought-connexion unites the various parts of his teaching: they seem discrepant only when it is missed. Of his politics the guiding principle is order. In *Latter Day Pamphlets* he applies it to institutions, as in *Past and Present* he had done to individuals. Thus, through 'wise obedience' and 'wise command' the twin aspects of his gospel of work—service and fellowship—are to be used to make 'pauper banditti' into 'soldiers of industry' and are

'to extend to the topmost heights of our society, and, in the course of generations, make us once more a Governed Commonwealth and Civitas Dei.'

It will take time: no 'Morrison's Pill' here. Stage by stage, industry will be organised and 'all private Captains of industry forced to incessantly co-operate with the State and its public Captains,' until, in the end, there is 'no unregistered worker any more.' So the State will, gradually, fulfil the function for which it exists,

that of rendering life 'possible,' desirable and noble' for its citizens. The method is organisation. Organisation so applied first to this industry and then to that, under direction by the State, is what we now call Nationalisation.

To complete the picture of what he meant one has only to recall the chapter called 'Permanence' in *Past and Present*. Here he touches on what has subsequently been called 'wage slavery,' to reject it and 'hint at,'

'one widest universal principle as the basis from which all organisation hitherto has grown up among men, and all henceforth will have to grow—the Principle of Permanent contract instead of temporary.'

Permanence is an element in every relationship of worth, whether personal or social, and can and does transform them. 'Wealth richer than both the Indies lies everywhere for man if he will endure.' But a permanent contract must be one that has in it the element of sharing. May not the master worker 'find it possible and needful to grant his workers permanent *interest* in his enterprise and theirs? So that it becomes, in practical result, what in essential fact and justice, it ever is, a joint enterprise.' In it, subject to whatever

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element of despotism that may be necessary for efficiency, 'Freedom, not nomad's freedom or ape's freedom, but man's freedom. This is indispensable.' The reconciliation is to be found in a rigorous justice. 'The laws of God: all men obey them and have no freedom at all but in obeying them.'

The State, seeking for the servants who can truly serve it, will ask about Education. For 'wise men *do* exist, born duly into the world in every current generation; but the getting of them regimented is the highest pitch of human polity, the feat of all feats in political engineering.' For that, education is the indispensable means. But here England in the middle of the century presents an amazing anomaly. From education the millions are shut out.

'Who would suppose that Education were a thing which had to be advocated on the ground of local expediency, or indeed on any ground? As if it stood not on the basis of everlasting duty, as a prime necessity of man. It is a thing that should need no advocating; much as it does actually need. To impart the gift of thinking to those who cannot think, and yet would, in that case, think; this, one would imagine, was the first function a government

had to set about discharging. Were it not a cruel thing to see, in any province of an Empire, the inhabitants living all mutilated in their limbs, each strong man with his right arm lamed? How much crueller to find the strong soul, with its eyes still sealed, its eyes extinct so that it sees not! Light has come into the world, but to this poor peasant it has come in vain. . . . Heavier wrong is not done under the sun.'

What of the happy few? An enlightened State would view our Etons and Oxfords 'with their nonsense verses, college logics and broken crumbs of mere *speech*' as a 'most astonishing seminary for the training of Young English souls to take command in human industries.' All this must be changed. There should be a Minister of Education and educational opportunities should be open to all. He writes, be it noted, in 1850.

Carlyle's position on democracy may then be summarily stated somewhat as follows: The view that government of the people should be conducted *for* the people he accepts as a platitude. His belief in the divinity in man demanded that no human being should be treated merely as an instrument for the ends of others. Not only is

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each human soul of intrinsic worth: in every action and motion of his brief mortality man is dependent on others and conditioned, for good or evil, by the fact that he lives, with others, in a society. The problem of government is analogous to the problem of individual life here, and, like it, governed by the fact, on the one hand, of man's relations to his fellows, and, on the other, of his and their relations to the infinite. It is, that is to say, a problem of effecting a correspondence between the temporal and the eternal order: and much larger issues are involved than those of form. Democracy is a form whose value depends on its content. Intrinsically it is neither good nor bad: its merit is that it is capable of being good. To make it good, government for the people must be applied as a principle of active order. The State, as representative and guardian, must accept responsibility and become a practical agent of co-ordination and control. Further, there must be worked out, always in rigorous relation to fact, the proper meaning of government *by* the people. If it means a most accurate selection and adjustment of men to tasks, good: on that, indeed, everything depends. Education available to all, so that talents may disclose themselves: then 'Tools to him who can handle them'—no other

test but this of handling being imposed, but this imposed with the utmost severity. If democracy means this, he is for it. On the other hand, the demand for direct election by popular vote to offices, is for him plain nonsense. So is the notion that, when you come down to work to be done, 'any man is as good as another.' For the special work of political leadership or executive direction, specific qualities are required, just as they are for any other branch of work. The men who have these qualities must, loyally, use them; the general body must, with equal loyalty, recognise that on no other term but this of accepting leadership can it secure self government or good government. For 'direct democracy' he has nothing but derision. Representative democracy, on the other hand, can be used to give us a 'government by the best' of an authority and authenticity such as can be secured through no other principle of discovering 'the best.' To achieve such a government is by far the most urgent of political tasks.

He was, in fact, more concerned about the end than about the means. Talk about democracy did not appeal to him, but of democratic action he laid out a plan of salutary, even revolutionary, thoroughness. If it has hardly been noticed, the

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reason seems to be that his readers have had a respect for words, and a want of interest in action, that would not have surprised, though it might have distressed him.

CHAPTER VII

‘AWAIT THE ISSUE’

‘Await the issue. In all battles, if you await the issue, each fighter has prospered according to his right. His right and his might at the close of the account were one and the same. He has fought with all his might and in exact proportion to his right he has prevailed. His very death is no victory over him. He dies, indeed, but his work lives, very truly lives.’

HAD any man such an awkward trick as Carlyle of digging down to fundamentals? The doctrine here set out, repeated in varying tones with unvarying emphasis throughout his work, cuts too deep for nearly all his critics. Some have tried to explain it away: others have based on it the view that he is the parent of Imperialism, Militarism and the school of force. The first course is absurd. He generally meant what he said; and if at times he puts the same dynamic charge behind a mouse that he does behind a mountain and breathes forth fire and fury without any sense of proportion in his rage, he is here seriously enunciating a doctrine that is central in his thought. The questionable phrases must be stressed not softened by any honest interpreter. The view that ‘at the close of the account’ the fighter who has fought with all that is in him has prevailed ‘in exact proportion to his right’ follows, logically, from Carlyle’s

certainty of the ultimate morality, the divine governance, of the universe. Here and now, evil may prevail against good: not in the long run. That, in the long run, good prevails and it alone does so, is the keynote of his philosophy.

To be vague on this point is to do him injustice. He was never vague himself; never shrank from pursuing his own thought to the ultimate limit; had indeed a native love of the last limit, inherited from a long line of argumentative ancestors. When he declared that, if you await the issue, right is might, he meant what he said. Moreover, everything else that he says hinges upon it.

On the threshold, therefore, the would-be critic or interpreter has got to ask himself whether he is prepared to reject this view and what the rejection of it means. Is it possible in such case, to see the universe as an intelligible whole, and the world order as a moral order? Is not the ultimate victory of right, the ultimate unity of right and might, the only operative belief conceivable? Can a man be an optimist on any other terms? Does not any other make action irrelevant if not absurd, and set discontinuity in the centre of the frame of things? Is not ‘right is might’ the statement that the principle of the conservation of energy applies in moral terms?

At any given moment, in relation to any given

enterprise or effort, success and failure may be sincerely held to be irrelevant. You go on, whether or no. Right, for immediate conduct, is an absolute. You do your work as well as you know how. It may, and you do not care, take you to defeat: you embark, hold your course, with calm pre-knowledge. But is not the root of this immediate indifference to results, of this obligation to persist, your conviction that, on a longer view and to a longer vision, right itself is to be safeguarded and preserved thereby? You are the temporary guardian of a principle. You know it has a life that extends far beyond yours. You know also that your frailty may injure, your treachery imperil it. If, because you are to be defeated, you abandon what you know to be right, you darken a light defeat could not extinguish. This belief that it cannot ultimately be extinguished, although here and now it may be so blown that no one can see it, is always there in your mind. Unless right is felt to be an indestructible element in the framework of things, connected action is impossible: right is, indeed, the short formula of the principle of connection.

Through much pain and torment, Carlyle won for himself the conviction that right is such an element. The battle was long and severe, and his thought bears its traces. Not only does it colour

its imagery; it affects its substance. If he talks of ‘prevailing,’ where we talk of survival, the difference aptly figures a deep difference of outlook. Life in his view was a perpetual and bitter war: the individual soul and the soul of society the theatre of the conflict of contending armies. His was a black and white mind, pictorial and solid: the ‘army of Darkness and Wrong’ was a real army to him, and a very powerful one. Never could he pretend that evil did not exist or see it as a mere absence of good. Black was for him a thing in itself, not the negation of white. Evil was positive, and in proportion to his sense of its strength he hated it. At times, indeed, its strength almost overwhelmed him, and one can hear him whistling in the dark; then, victory snatched from the jaws of defeat, he sings pæans in which the tension of the struggle vibrates discordant. Then, just because evil is so real to him, he denies it all validity. Perhaps he felt that the amount of certainty on which he could live was insufficient for the weaker brethren—and probably he was right.

Shrillnesses and exaggerations—characteristic vice of the propagandist, and one to which he was congenitally subject—do not really affect the main point, though they obscure it. He knew the taste of defeat: none better. All the more thor-

oughly did he believe in 'right, whether or no!' The very instance he chooses, in the passage quoted from at the opening of this chapter, 'is illuminating. The man whose right he sees as prevailing, through defeat and disaster, is William Wallace, crushed under the Hammer of the Scots, but living on in the heart of a nation, because he stood for something true, greater than himself, and greater than defeat or victory.

'A heroic Wallace, quartered on the scaffold, cannot hinder that his Scotland become, one day, a part of England: but he does hinder that it become, on tyrannous, unfair terms, a part of it; commands still, as with a God's voice, from his old Valhalla and Temple of the Brave, that there be a just reunion as of brother and brother, not a false and merely semblant one as of slave and master. . . . Fight on, thou brave, true heart and falter not, through dark fortune and through bright. The cause thou fightest for, so far as it is true, no farther, yet precisely so far, is very sure of victory. The falsehood alone of it will be conquered, will be abolished as it ought to be: but the truth of it is part of Nature's own Laws, co-operates with the world's eternal tendencies, and cannot be conquered.'

Does this mean that a wrong cause cannot triumph? that injustice cannot express itself in fact? that, for example, a Versailles Treaty cannot be imposed? Not at all. It means, as we are seeing in the case of the Peace Treaty, that the elements of falseness and injustice in any apparent accomplishment will, sooner or later, crumble it away from within. Suffering, harm, waste, definite and positive evil are caused in the process; yes; last of men would Carlyle deny the reality of the price paid by humanity for wrong-doing, or contend that the innocent do not suffer for the guilty. ‘Alle Sund’ rächt sich auf Erden.’ He would agree: agree further that the revenge that comes for a denial of right often has a terrible extension and apparent inaccuracy of aim.

In the passage already quoted from *Past and Present*, he is careful with his tense. In this, however, his propagandist fervour, his strong intolerant hatred of evil, his utter refusal to pretend it is good, frequently betray him. He shifts his tense. ‘Magna est veritas et praevalebit.’ That belief, indispensable key to continuous effort, suffers a picturesque shift into the historic present and appears as ‘Magna est veritas et praevalet.’ The present, one must remember, is, from him, an ‘inconsiderable film’ between the Past and the Future. It is nothing of the kind for most of his

readers. The average human discounts the future, forgets the past, and lays inordinate stress on the present. Much confusion has resulted from Carlyle's intense pre-vision in this regard. But when he said 'Await the issue' he meant it. It should be inserted, when he happens not to repeat it.

Here another point comes in, radically connected with his sense of life as a battlefield. The struggle between the forces of Right and Wrong, justice and injustice, is, at any moment, so close that the primary obligation on every individual and test of his worth is to take part in it. Not to be aware, not to take a stand in the ranks, is to betray the cause. He that is not with us is against us. Indifference, unawareness, all the variations of low-temperature complacency, are to him abominable. To the marrow of his bones, he is a partisan; he loathes and despises people who do not 'take sides,' who share the view of Ebenezer Scrooge that all this is no business of theirs. Men who care enough to be wrong are less intolerable to him than those who do not care enough to be right. Not to care, not to see what is going on, to be indifferent to the huge and terrible contest, is for him the crime of crimes. Hence his love of men of action, of all those who, for a good cause, or even for a poor one, strain every nerve, put out

every ounce of vitality that is in them. It is not in him to be just to a subtlety of mind which issues, only too often, in an incapacity for action, or to any brand of contemplative quietism. Quietists he confounds with saunterers, philanderers, and dilettantes. Temperamentally he puts persons of vital energy who believe no matter in what, before unbelievers—and this at a time when the typical ‘successful’ man was of the tribe of smug, shallow, uninspired unbelievers. Laziness of mind and want of feeling are the supreme sins. ‘Real’ men he loves; and he can see all kinds of reality, although he tries to express the diversity in terms of some unity. Intellectually he repudiates any effort to pin opinion down to a chart; recognises at once the arrogant folly of declaring that all our predecessors dwelt in error while we are wholly right, and, in *Sartor* and elsewhere, expressly underlines the progressive discovery of truth and the fact that it is, as yet, far from complete. ‘No man whatever believes, or can believe, exactly what his grandfather believed: he enlarges somewhat, by fresh discovery, his view of the universe . . . which is an *infinite* Universe, and can never be embraced wholly or finally by any view or theorem.’ Outworn and untrue beliefs have to be exploded; if maintained too long, and imposed by force, they may have to be exploded

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by Revolution. 'All destruction, by violent revolution or however it may be, is but new creation on a wider scale.' Thus the Reformation and the Puritan Revolution, like the French Revolution, represents a clearing away of false sovereign ideas essential to the discovery of truth. No true 'conservative' will conserve a rotten branch to infect a sound tree.

A man who believes, however, tends to regard 'his own insight as final'; and no one felt that tendency more strongly than Carlyle. So, again in *Sartor*, he cries:

'Are not all true men that live or that ever have lived, soldiers of the same army, enlisted under Heaven's captaincy, to do battle against the same enemy, the Empire of Darkness and Wrong?'

For him, right is not only an element in the structure of things, but the alone enduring element. It has to contend with and is embedded in a mass of other contrary stuff: but it is, and that stuff is not, a reflection of the enduring pattern the whole strives to realise, and will realise in proportion as right prevails in the minds and action of men. There is in the universe an 'invisible justice,' a soul of right and truth, which

men can partially know and entirely believe in. The greatest men, for him, are those in whom this knowledge is purest. Cromwell, Knox, Luther, Dante were heroes after his own heart, as Frederick of Prussia, on whom he spent so many laborious years, never was. The pages of his correspondence, in the eleven years of his wrestling with him, are full of groans over the ‘want of sufficient love for lean Frederick and his heroisms.’ It was only by a process of immersion in his world—a world for Carlyle darkly devoid of the sparks that make living souls—that he grew to have for him an unwilling, strictly relative, admiration. To the last Frederick never gave him what Cromwell did, in his ‘robes of light.’ Cromwell *knew*. That was his strength. It was because of his contact with truth that his action was right, and has prevailed.

Whether or no such action succeeds, in the material plane, here and now, in the end it will, in the sense that a trace or deposit of it will remain for the guidance of later generations. The day’s wages may be nothing: may be obloquy, scorn and contempt; indifference, what we call failure, may last for centuries: the trace may be so completely overlaid that it seems to have disappeared: but in the end it is safe and the man is safe.

‘The day’s wages of John Milton’s day work named *Paradise Lost* and *Milton’s Works* were ten pounds paid by instalments, and a rather close escape from death on the gallows. Consider that: it is no rhetorical flourish; it is an authentic, altogether quiet fact—emblematic, quietly documentary of a whole world of such, ever since human history began. Oliver Cromwell quitted his farming: undertook a Hercules’ labour and life-long wrestle with that Lernean Hydra-coil, wide as England, hissing heavenward through its thousand crowned, coronetted, shovel-hatted quack-heads; and he did wrestle with it, the truest and terriblest wrestle I have heard of; and he wrestled it, and mowed and cut it down a good many stages, so that its hissing is ever since pitiful in comparison, and one can walk abroad in comparative peace from it;—and his wages, as I understand, were burial under the gallows tree near Tyburn Turnpike, with his head on the gable of Westminster Hall, and two centuries now of mixed ridicule from all manner of men. His dust lies under the Edgware Road near Tyburn Turnpike, at this hour; and his memory is—Nay, what matters what his memory is? His memory, at bottom, is or yet shall be as that of a God: a terror and

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horror to all quacks and cowards and insincere persons: an everlasting encouragement, new memento, battle word, and pledge of victory to all the brave. It is the natural course and history of the Godlike, in every place, in every time. What god ever carried it with the Ten Pound Franchisers; in open vestry, or with any Sanhedrin of considerable standing? When was a god found “agreeable” to everybody? The regular way is to hang, kill, crucify your gods, and execrate and trample them under your stupid hoofs for a century or two: until you discover that they are gods -- and then take to braying over them, still in a very long-eared manner.’

If Cromwell now stands in the yard outside the House of Commons, Carlyle put him there; it was he who unburied the ‘great man and great action lying buried under a waste continent of cinders.’ Cromwell’s destiny in this is a fair example of Carlyle’s belief that the constructive worker, the hero who knows, cannot ultimately fail, nor can falsehood, incorporated in destructive forces and persons, ultimately prevail. The alloys are burned away: the gold is indestructible. In the long run, he reverses Mark Antony’s saying: What lives after a man is the truth that was in

him: that truth is his fiery particle. Even if mixed up in falsehood it will live while the falsehood perishes. Cromwell's visible success was less than Napoleon's. The collapse of his work seemed hardly less complete. For Carlyle he was infinitely the greater hero because there was more of truth in him. Of Napoleon, what has survived? A vital principle of immense energy and potency, a man of will; and, as contribution to permanence, a spark of truth—'Tools to him who can handle them.' 'Surely it is the test of every divine man this same, and without it he is not divine or great—that he have fire in him to burn up somewhat of the sins of the world, of the miseries and errors of the world: why else is he there?' He need not be a 'Friend of Humanity': some of its worst enemies are actually to be found among these. But he must have this fire. Carlyle's remarks on Napoleon, in this connection, ought to be quoted, since there is much misapprehension as to his reasons for not giving him place among the supreme heroes of victorious will:

'Napoleon himself, not the superfinest of great men, and ballasted sufficiently with prudences and egoisms had, nevertheless, as is clear enough, an idea to start with: the idea that democracy was the Cause of Man, the right

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and infinite Cause. Accordingly, he made himself “the armed soldier of democracy,” and did vindicate it in a rather great manner. Nay, to the very last, he had a kind of idea; that namely, of “*La carrière ouverte aux talents*,” the tools to him that can handle them: really one of the best ideas yet promulgated on that matter, or rather the one true central idea, towards which all the others, if they tend anywhere, must tend. Unhappily it was in the military province only that Napoleon could realise this idea of his, being forced to fight for himself the while: before he got it tried to any extent in the civil province of things, his head by much victory grew light (no head can stand more than its quantity); and he lost head, as they say, and became a selfish ambitionist and quack; leaving his idea to be realised, in the civil province of things, by others. Thus was Napoleon; thus are all great men: children of the idea; or, in Ram Dass’s phraseology, furnished with fire to burn up the miseries of men.’¹

In ‘Await the issue’ there is involved a sense of the continuity of human life as well as of the necessary continuity of moral action. It is not for

¹Essay on Scott.

himself that the great man tends the spark of fire: it is to burn up the sins, miseries and errors afflicting his brothers. The sign of Napoleon's 'light' or, as we would say, 'swelled' head, is that he became a 'selfish ambitionist'; lost sight of others in the interest of himself.

Talk about the 'service of humanity' displeased Carlyle, but everywhere the sense of community broods behind, to give body and substance to his creed and come to the surface now and then with a poignant clarity of perception and of statement. It inter-penetrates his conception of the hero and the way in which he sees him as the servant and instrument of right: is indeed the principle of selection for his heroes, subject of course to his prejudices and limitations of vision. It is in part the reason why he, who regarded the Arch-stupid as the Arch-enemy, inclines, in general, to exalt 'character' above intellect, or to speak as if he did. He is perfectly clear that the really great mind and heart are inseparable, but his emphasis does tend to be on heart and will, rather than on sheer intellect. Certainly the pure intellectual is no hero of his.

Behind this there is surely working a sense that certain simple moral attributes—kindness, fairness, companionableness, truthfulness in speech and act—are more obviously within the range

of every one than the corresponding span of mental attributes. Man cannot by taking thought add a cubit to his stature, but open to every son of Adam is the opportunity to be a man and not an ape. (It was perhaps his loathing of ape-men that made him so obstinately obtuse in his attitude to Darwinian evolution; that man was descended from gorillas was a notion he could not swallow.) Character is a universal; a safer social basis, therefore, than intelligence.

The man who attends to his own job with a single eye to doing it well, without any side glance at the ‘race,’ pleases him best. To doing it well: not, be it noted, to his own ‘salvation.’ The terminology and ideology of salvation are odious to him.

‘Methodism, with its eye forever turned on its own navel; asking itself with torturing anxiety of Hope and Fear: “Am I right? Am I wrong? Shall I be saved? Shall I not be damned?; what is this, at bottom, but a new phase of *Egoism*, stretched out into the infinite; not always the heavenly tier for its infinitude. Brother, so soon as possible, endeavour to rise above that.’

At the same time he is incorrigibly unjust to

certain kinds of worker. The service which he recognises most easily is that rendered by action. True, the spoken or written word may be the greatest form of action: the highest man of all is the spiritual toiler, 'when his outward and inward endeavours are one: when we can name him Artist.' But in his want of appreciation of the silent labours of the scientist—which ought, on his own theory, to have appealed to him as the perfect example of work well done for its own sake—he simply fails to see the human reference of the work he misprizes. There are passages which, taken as they stand, suggest that he suffered, at times, from the unhappy scepticism of his own instrument and irrational tendency to exalt muscle above mind that afflict so many brain workers.

Like other people he got a hair in his pen now and then, but the main stream of his writing is clear enough. In sum, he teaches: Search honestly for the truth, rejecting prejudices, hearsays, shams, short-cuts of all kinds, and using your own mind and trusting to it—sincerity being the first virtue of a man, without which indeed there is no other. Go on searching. Believe in what you find true and act upon it, for it is not enough to have a belief, it must become a faith, i.e. a principle of action. Truth will not betray you. 'Him that

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is loyal to wisdom, wisdom will reward and him only; he shall acquire strength by going, for all the Universe is on his side.’ Every fraction of truth has immortality and is a treasure for your brothers. You, the seeker and doer, are not the measure of success, nor your destiny, as seen by you, of the validity of the truth you serve. You may slay monsters, for others, and perish in the act. Success consists in the fact of action, making you, in virtue of the faith it incarnates, a living co-operator in society, a helper and server in its arduous movement to the light. So, you contribute your part to a world of heroes, and a world whose life extends, before and behind you, beyond your sight.

Had Carlyle worked out fully and clearly the vital connection between his view of prevalent right and the idea of community, he might have seen that it provides a key to the problem presented to one who accepts the reality of the material universe by the doctrine of evolution. Darwin’s work came to him too late for that. He did, however, see, more clearly than any other contemporary with the exception of Mill in his final phase, the significance of co-operation and the social idea. Read his pages socially and they are coherent: read them with a pragmatist bias, and they refuse to hang together. Froude,

it is true, derived a sort of sanction for Imperialism from them, and militarists can find isolated passages of seeming support; but any interpretation that takes in all the evidence is bound to present him as a pacifist. Carlyle justified some wars in the past: but his view of war is expressed with the last clearness in *Sartor*.¹ If in *Latter Day Pamphlets* and *Shooting Niagara* he expresses admiration of and even hankering after military discipline, it is not for use in killing but as a method of order, organisation and loyalty, and as an opportunity of demonstrating the fact that to obey may be as noble as to command. There always have been sincere pacifists who accept his view of the citizen army as an instrument of education—perhaps the only possible one for securing that it is really level and universal—and a safeguard against war. To others it seems a most fatal error and an abandonment of the whole opposition to force. Carlyle certainly did not put the soldier first, even as a server.

Where he does fall into serious error, to an extent that issues at times in a travesty of his doctrine, is in the attempt to prove that every action of a hero is right. There are pages and passages, apropos of Cromwell, Loyola, Frederick,

¹ *Centre of Indifference*. 'Horrible enough! A whole Marchfeld strewed with shell splinters. . . .' *et seq.*

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Dr. Francia, Governor Eyre and others that are sheer journalism, and bad journalism at that. In a group of sentimentalists and phrasemongers a man may find himself defending someone ‘who has the courage to be wrong’; but he ought to know, when he does so, that he is paying inverted tribute to the atmosphere. Carlyle not infrequently pays such tribute and, unfortunately for his readers, pays it at the top of his voice. He never said anything *sotto voce*. When he spoke at all, he shouted, and he nowhere shouts more vociferously than when he is illustrating the Nemesis that can come upon a lover of action for its own sake. He loses his temper, in fact; and then tries to justify it. That may happen to any controversialist. There is no reason why his readers should pay the heavy price of taking these ebullitions at more than their face value. There are straws and sticks, dead leaves and rubbish, here and there, on the surface of every strongly flowing stream.

Difficulties, of course, remain, even when the gospel is read socially. The consequences of effective action are often very different from those planned, or from those apparent to any one generation. Survival is conditioned by circumstances as well as by intrinsic quality. And so on. But the difficulties, though great,

attach to any and every attempt to see the world as a whole, and make it intelligible and moral. Instead of shirking or eliding, Carlyle emphasised and coloured them. They were part of 'fact.'

Throughout, it must never be forgotten that, crudely as he may often express himself, his scale and standard of values, as of success, is spiritual. He admires a conquering and resolute will, set with energy, courage and patience to determined action. But his notion of achievement is not the exercise of brute force either in the private or the national sphere. He hates cruelty, blindness and man's inhumanity to man. They hurt and will not let him rest. He is moved to passionate pity and indignation by the thought of the suffering workman, the starving seamstress, the baffled, angry and abused Chartist. But, having a hard mind as well as a tender heart, he will not hide the medicine of fact in any jam of sentiment. He flatters neither workers nor anybody else with words. His harsh realism is continuous. He reports Frederick as crying to his troops, 'Dogs, would ye live for ever?' This, says, Morley, is 'a measure of Carlyle's own valuation of the store we ought to set on the lives of the most.' Except for the implication conveyed in the last three words, he would not have objected. Who is to live for ever?

Who is to expect happiness, or think himself of great account? No one. Where Morley is unjust is in his tag, with its suggested separation of the ‘most’—i.e., as he explains, the ‘common man’—from the few. Carlyle made no such distinction. As an opportunity for heroism, every life is of priceless value: intrinsically and in advance, none. The man who wrote ‘Two men I honour and no third’ and a hundred other passages need not be defended against class snobbery. But his view of humanity is stern, not mealy-mouthed. Men are ‘mostly fools.’ Most people think so. He says so. When Morley goes on to declare he had ‘no sympathy with the masses,’ he is right in a sense different from what he means to suggest. Carlyle has no ‘sympathy’ with anyone; least of all does he insult the ‘masses’ with it. They are suffering from an idiotic and perverse system which he wants to see ended: sympathy with its victims is not his method. He is an astringent, not a consoling teacher. He wants an operation, not a soothing lotion applied to the body politic. The condition of England makes him angry. Would it not have made Christ angry? Did he sympathise with the poor?

In a letter to Mill he congratulates him on a

‘decided little utterance,’ with a ‘quiet emphasis,

a conscious incontrovertibility, which (heretic that I am) I rejoice to see growing in you.'

'Such a feeling, such a mode of writing seems to me, in these days especially, the only fruitful one: emphasis in uttering, what is it but the natural result of entireness in believing: the *first* condition of all worth in words spoken, and quite especially precious in a despicable, sceptical, "supposing," weathercock, foundationless era such as ours? Give me, above and before all things, a man that has legs to stand on: keep far from me, were it possible, the innumerable decrepit culs-de-jatte, that can stand, that can move nowhere, but only by permission of all bystanders to move *whithersoever they are shoved!* You perceive, therefore, I set little store by this so celebrated virtue of tolerance; alas, I cannot say that I have almost ever seen such a virtue; only seen, often enough and with ever-increasing dislike, Indifferentism parading itself in the stolen garments of it. "I came not into the world to bring peace, but a sword." Such is, perhaps, in all cases part of the stern mission which a good man feels laid on him. How different, above all, is that honey-mouthed, tear-stained, soup kitchen Jesus Christ of our poor shovel-hatted modern Christians from the stern-

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visaged Christ of the Gospels proclaiming aloud in the market place (with such a total contempt of the social respectabilities): “*Woe* unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” Descend from your gigs, ye wretched scoundrels, for the hour is come.’

Again in *Latter Day Pamphlets* he puts the same point of view in another way:

‘Understand too that except upon a basis of even such rigour, sorrowful, silent, inexorable as that of Destiny and Doom, there is no true pity possible. The pity that proves so plentiful and possible without that basis is merely *ignavia* and cowardly effeminacy; maudlin laxity of heart, grounded in blinkered dimness of head — contemptible as a drunkard’s tears.’

In his bones, though not in his intellect, he was a Manichæan, who saw the world as scene of a grim struggle between the forces of Darkness and Light. This battle terminology of his is not to be taken literally any more than Blake’s cry that his sword should not sleep in his hand till Jerusalem was built. What thrills him in an army is its organised, directed action. ‘Twenty men

united in love can accomplish much that to two thousand isolated men were impossible.' When he calls to the workers to realise 'a nobler chivalry than that of war' he has in mind all that can be accomplished by co-operation. The sword they are to lift is the sword of the spirit. It, edged with truth, is an irresistible sword.

Between freedom and such co-operation, such obedience, he saw no antithesis. His fatalism leaves ample scope for freedom to choose to be on the side of light. The power of choice, covering at once resolute action and silent control, is open to every man, however, rude, simple or ignorant. 'Brother, thou hast possibility in thee for much: the possibility of writing on the eternal skies the record of a heroic life.' It is there for 'highest' and for 'lowest.' Its consequences, if achieved, will extend far beyond the individual who does or refrains from doing. Society will bear its traces for good or for evil. The existence of society, indeed, confirms and unites the lastingness of the moral order and the vital importance of individual action. No right thought or deed is lost: it is a passport to immortality.

The dark light of Carlyle and the genial glôw of Browning may seem to shine in different firmaments. Yet the philosophy of 'right is might,' of

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‘awaiting the issue’ is not so far from the philosophy of Rabbi ben Ezra.

‘All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
That I was worth to God, whose hand the
pitcher shaped.

* * * *

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall.
Earth changes but thy soul and God stand
sure.’

It is a philosophy of immense patience. ‘Beyond yourselves shall ye love one day. Then learn first of all to Love,’ cried Nietzsche. As it stands it will serve; if ‘believe’ be substituted for ‘love’ the words might have been spoken by Carlyle. When men have learned to believe in right they can build a society upon it, and one that will endure. Not before.

CHAPTER VIII

MUSIC AND MORALS

‘I find in this, as in the other two speeches, that noblest self-assertion, that believing originality which is like sacred fire, the *beginning* of whatsoever is to flame and work; and for young men especially one sees not what could be more vivifying. But for yourself, my friend, I prophesy it will not do always: a faculty is in you for a *sort* of speech which is itself *action*, an artistic sort. You *tell* us with piercing emphasis that man’s soul is great; *show* us a great soul of a man, in some work symbolic of such: this is the seal of such a message, and you will feel bye and bye that you are called to this.’

Letter to R. W. Emerson.

‘So many persons,’ Carlyle recorded in his Journal in 1835, ‘almost everybody that speaks to me, objects to my style as “too full of meaning.”’ These objectors were more candid than some that have followed them. Excess of meaning is the difficulty. He was aware of it himself. ‘Truly,’ he goes on, in the same entry, ‘I feel like one that was bursting with meaning, that had no utterance for it, that would and must get one—a most indescribably uneasy feeling, were it not for the hope.’ Late in his life, writing to Gavan Duffy, he remarked, ‘A man’s thoughts, though striving for utterance, refuse to speak themselves in empty air—much that I have meant has had to go alto-

gether unspoken.' In the *Reminiscences*, again, he says:

'The ultimate rule is, Learn so far as possible to be intelligible and transparent, no notice taken of your "style," but solely of what you express by it; this is your clear rule, and if you *have* anything that is not quite trivial to express to your contemporaries you will find such rule a great deal more difficult to follow than many people think.'

About his own style there is not, at this date, much that need be said. Morley's cool fiat that 'its eccentricities may be expected to deprive his work of that permanence which is only secured by classic form,' has found its refutation. As a late critic, in general almost as cool, puts it:

'We talk of Carlyle's tricks and mannerisms; in *Frederick* they are by no means painful though they are present; but here and everywhere they are his own, they are himself. The mannerisms of a school, the trick of the followers of Macaulay, which has passed into a thousand leading articles, is none the more admirable because it gets into the texture of such daily wear and forms what is called an

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“influence.” There is more style, more literature, in an ounce of Carlyle than in a ton of such work.’¹

For harshest criticism one may go to himself in *Sartor*, where his humorous description of Sauerteig’s method of narration anticipates, with boisterous gusto, almost every animadversion since passed. In his own day, exception was taken to his ‘barbarous locutions,’ to which indeed John Sterling pontifically refused admission to the language, in a letter to their inventor:

“ ‘Environment,” “vestural,” “stertorous,” “visualised,” “complected,” and others to be found I think in the first twenty pages are words, so far as I know, without any authority: some of them contrary to analogy; and none repaying by their value the disadvantage of novelty. To these must be added new and erroneous locutions: “whole other tissues” for *all the others*, and similar uses of the word *whole*; “orients” for *pearls*; “lucid” and “lucent” employed as if they were different in meaning. . . . “talented,” a mere newspaper and hustings word, etc.’

¹*Survey of English Literature*. Elton.

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Nine-tenths of the words rejected by Sterling's pedantry have found admission to the Oxford Dictionary, and instead of cavilling that they have 'no authority' we may thank Carlyle for extending our vocabulary.¹

His style, both in choice of words and in arrangement, is highly individual, as his mind was. He is the most idiomatic, the most easily recognisable writer in English. But this idiom of his is no trick. There is nothing mannered in it. It is the natural voice of a man. Of a Scotsman, it is true. The national passion for 'flyting,' for piling up sonorous words (especially when they are words of abuse, in which his invention is prolific) continually breaks out. He shocked a polite age with what Chesterton has wittily called 'the grand

¹ 'After Keats, the faculty of word-creation shows a remarkable decline. In Carlyle, however, the Victorian era possessed one great word-creator, one who could treat language with the audacity of the old writers, and could, like them, fuse his temperament into a noun or adjective, and stamp it with his image. "Croakery," "gigmanity," "Bedlamism," "grumbly," "dandiacal" — would any one but Carlyle have invented words like these? He had a genius for nicknames, his "pig-philosophy" and "dismal science" are still remembered, and his eccentricities and audacities would fill many pages. But his contributions were not all of this personal character; like Sir Walter Scott, he introduced words like "feckless," "lilt" and "outcome" into England out of Scotland, and a number of current words like "environment" and "decadent" are traced to his writings.'

L. Pearsall Smith. *The English Language*.

vulgarity of the Gospels.' But the faults—over-emphasis, repetition, piling up of words, both nouns and adjectives, in heaps, where one would serve—do not impede the free forward rush of his speech. He gets there. The weight of water his stream carries actually accelerates its flow. He can make us see the things he wants us to see, feel the things he wants us to feel. He had no trace of the special English 'talent for silence' which he describes in the Introduction to *Cromwell*:

'Have not we English a talent for silence? Our very speech and printed speech, such a force of torpor dwelling in it, is properly a higher power of silence. There is no silence like the speech you cannot listen to without danger of locked-jaw!'

The silence which he valued and practised was the long thought that precedes pregnant words. His own speech, broken in surface, with poetry thrusting itself like veins of ore through the nervous texture of prose, is instinct with vitality. Of landscape, whether directly given or, as in *Cromwell*, suggested, and of portraiture, he is master. He can show us the human creature from without and, in broad colour masses, if never in subtle shades, from within. Living

figures start from his pages. His letters are starred with vivid vignettes of his contemporaries, as sharply seen as the men and women of the Revolution, the Cromwelliad, or Frederick's Prussia. Who can forget Coleridge's 'shuffling step,' his voice, 'naturally good, contracted into a plaintive snuffle and sing-song' or his 'deep eyes, of a light hazel, as full of sorrow as of inspiration; confused pain looked mildly from them, as in a kind of mild astonishment;' or Wordsworth, with his 'stern blue eyes, superior to men and to circumstances . . . a man of an immense head and great jaws like a crocodile's, cast in a mould designed for prodigious work;' or 'Good Harriet Martineau,' in whom 'there is such a lively dispatch, such a sharp *needling* compactness' that 'one wishes her heartily well—at a distance'; or Frederick Denison Maurice, 'one of the most entirely uninteresting men of genius that I meet with in society. All twisted screwed, withdrawn, with such a restless sensitiveness: the uttermost inability to let Nature have fair play with him . . . pure-hearted, earnest, humane creature as he is'; or Macaulay, 'the sublime of commonplace,' who 'speaks with a kind of *gowstering* emphasis, laughs occasionally (*not* at things really ludicrous, but where a laugh is demanded by the exigencies

of the case) with a loud wooden, but frank and good-natured tone,' 'grandson of a Highland minister, and really very much (intrinsically) like a Highland minister himself, tho' "preaching" in a very different element, and with a stipend immensely enlarged'; or poor Hartley Coleridge, 'the strangest ghost of a human creature, with eyes that gleamed like two rainbows over a ruined world?' There were types—for instance, what Coleridge arrogantly called the 'Hamlet type,' and many others—to which Carlyle could not be fair: but his insight into the larger human motives and motions is sure. Only the wilfully blind can fail to perceive, behind his shrillest diatribes, that deep love of his fellows which exposes a heart to the pain of which the shrill voice is the automatic register. He is often angry and very often prejudiced; never cynical.

In narrative he is supreme. No story is more magnificently got and kept going than that of the Revolution. Equally masterly, in different vein, are the tale of Abbot Samson in *Past and Present*, which has the coloured detail of the page of a lovingly decorated missal, and the vast canvas of Frederick. Always, the action moves and the reader feels himself part of it: yet, in its exhilarating, breathless onward sweep, there come sudden

sharp arrests that actually increase the sense of whirlwind speed. No matter how often it has been read there is an electric shock in the second chapter in the second book of the *French Revolution*, that headed 'Petition in Hieroglyphs,' opening with these words:

'With the working people, again, it is not so well. Unlucky! For there are from twenty to twenty-five millions of them. Whom, however, we lump into a kind of dim compendious unity, monstrous but dim, far off, as the *canaille*; or, more humanely, as "the masses." Masses indeed, and yet, singular to say, if, with an effort of imagination, we follow them, over broad France, into their clay hovels, into their garrets and hutches, the mass consists all of units. Every unit of whom has his own heart and sorrows; stands covered there with his own skin, and if you prick him, he will bleed. O purple Sovereignty, Holiness, Reverence; thou, for example, Cardinal Grand Almoner, with thy plush covering of honour, who hast thy hands strengthened with dignities and monies, and art set on thy world-watch tower, solemnly in sight of God, for such ends — what a thought: that every unit of these masses is a miraculous Man, even as thyself

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art; struggling, with vision or with blindness, for *his* infinite kingdom (this life which he has got, once only, in the middle of Eternities); with a spark of the divinity, what thou callest an immortal soul, in him!’

And it is not only in picture, narrative, surprise, in the power to render the form and pressure of great events, that he excels. For him, ‘all the past read true is prophecy,’ and his judgments speak, and speak truth, to the mind as forcibly as do his pictures to the eye. Thus the tremendous chapter giving the horror of the September massacres closes with the reminder that —

‘Fell slaughter, one of the most authentic products of the Pit you would say, once give it customs becomes War, with Laws of War; and is customary and moral enough; and red individuals carry the tools of it girt round their haunches, not without an air of pride, — which do thou nowise blame. While, see! so long as it is but dressed in hodden or russet and Revolution, less frequent than War, has not yet got its Laws of Revolution, but the hodden or russet individuals are unc customary — O shrieking, beloved brother Blockheads of Mankind let us close those wide mouths of ours;

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let us cease shrieking, and begin considering!

Let us, indeed; if we do we shall not call him a militarist, or pretend that he was indifferent to the 'lot of the most.'

That Carlyle's *French Revolution* is the Revolution no one who reads it doubts: moreover, throughout its passion and fury the actual facts are presented with the utmost faithfulness both of circumstance and sequence. His respect for fact was unfailing. His preliminary work was of the last thoroughness. 'He is,' says Mr. Belloc, 'without question one of the most accurate historians who ever put pen to paper.' Sterling objected, above all, to what he calls the 'painful subjective excitement' of Carlyle's writing. Certainly his are hardly 'bed books'; against the charge of exciting his readers he cannot be defended. On this and on his style generally, the true word remains that spoken by Emerson, in a review of *Past and Present*, written in *The Dial*.¹ He notes that Carlyle is the first to develop a mode of writing corresponding adequately to the vastness and complexity of the modern world.

'Carlyle is the first domestication of the

¹ Printed as Preface to Everyman edition.

modern system, with its infinity of details, into style. We have been civilising very fast, building London and Paris and now planting new England and India, New Holland and Oregon—and it has not appeared in literature: there has been no analogous expansion and recognition in books. Carlyle's style is the first emergence of all this wealth and labour with which the world has gone with child so long. London and Europe, tunnelled, graded, corn-lawed, with trade nobility and East and West Indies for dependencies, and America, with the Rocky Hills in the horizon, have never before been conquered in literature. This is the first invasion and conquest. How like an air balloon or bird of Jove does he seem to float over the Continent, and, stooping here and there, to pounce on a fact as a symbol which was never a symbol before.'

Emerson's words suggest a comparison among artists that, if perceived, haunts the imagination. For all his pictorial quality, it is in musical terms that Carlyle speaks first to one, and in total impression his analogue is Richard Wagner. They resemble one another in scale and mass; in detonating and thrilling force; in the sense of Fate that pervades their work, enhanced, in either case, by

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a marvellous in-and-out weaving of repeated significant motifs; and in an effort to comprehend, within the limits of a work of art, the entire scope of human destiny, temporal and eternal, that is so nearly successful as to produce an impression of architectonic grandeur surpassed only by Shakespeare and by Aeschylus. Each sees something older than reason. Each is grappling with a world, and with a new world, aware of the forces that make it. Each has a strongly idiomatic speech. Each offers to the spirit a beauty grounded in the most poignant human appeal. Akin in what they have, Carlyle and Wagner are also brothers in what they lack. Neither is subtle, soothing or quiet. Certain delicacies, certain reserves of thought and feeling, are sealed to each. Neither is, in the strict sense, an intellectual. Marked differences, of course, there are. Carlyle has a more rigorous intellect than Wagner; the ugly muddlement of the *Ring* story would have offended him. He has a higher concept of the heroic. Above all, he loved men, while Wagner cannot be cleared of the taint of despising them. He is compact of humour, while Wagner's humour is, at best, an uncertain quantity. Where Wagner is bourgeois, he is proletarian. He could no more have sunk to the vulgarities of the second Act of *Parsifal* than he could have plumbed the

emotional reaches of *Tristan*. Something pure, strong, and essentially innocent in his soul kept him, who knew so much of the cleansing fire of sorrow, ignorant of the sick and dishonouring pain of disillusionment.

In the quite considerable list of things he did not know, this purity, this innocence of heart, accounts for a good many. To the pure in heart, the Beatitudes promise that they shall see God. Perhaps also the Devil. Not, however, the tribe of creepy, crawling things that, finding some nourishment in the mind behind the eye that looks upon them, interpose a viscous film between it and beauty, and corrupt and undermine faith in the goodness it symbolises.

Familiar with the long reaches of melancholy, Carlyle was not, in the poorer and more painful sense, unhappy. From that, the large outline of his soul protected him. In his personal life he knew sorrow; he felt far too deeply, cared far too tenderly, to escape it. Some pain he cannot have helped causing to those who cared for him. But the root of his melancholy, and of his splendid effort to translate it into saving achievement, was not personal. His soul was steeped in pity, but it was pity, never for himself, always for the brothers and sisters whose helpless and, in the main, innocent suffering made his heart ache with

MUSIC AND MORALS

a pang that would not let him rest. Whether one thinks of him as human being, artist or prophet, largeness is the distinguishing trait. He was large himself, and he makes the world look large as we live with him. Tragic, no doubt; a difficult and hazardous adventure, with all the responsibilities shadowing it that belong to the fact that to us and to every one of our companions it is given once and no second time; but an opportunity as well as a trial, and shot with laughter as well as with pain.

‘Nor do I wish all men to become Psalmist Asaphs and fanatic Hebrews. Far other is my wish; far other and wider is now my notion of this Universe. Populations of stern faces, stern as any Hebrew, but capable withal of bursting into inextinguishable laughter on occasion: Do you understand that new and better form of character? Laughter also, if it come from the heart, is a heavenly thing.’¹

The vision of the world as a solemn chorus, breaking out, at times, into ‘inextinguishable laughter’ from the heart, is at once the key to the things he leaves out, and to the difficulties he must always present to the light-minded.

¹*The Opera.*

THOMAS CARLYLE

Goethe's word stands—he is a 'moral force of great importance.' His morals, like his religion, were a certainty. Indeed, his morals are his religion. Tearing up the convenient and cynical compartmentations of his time, and of ours, he insists that there is one morality, the same for public and for private conduct, and that by its unflinching application over the entire range of life, and by that alone, we can regenerate society. Easy he does not pretend it is going to be; action is not a picnic; he has nothing but scorn for any promise of comfort or escape. He hunts down all the evasions and the subterfuges and exposes them in turn—the intellectual subterfuges as ruthlessly as the conventional. Believing that there is capable of being achieved on earth a communal life which, in its consciousness of loving brotherhood and its acceptance of faithful service, will realise the pattern of a true society by giving to each of its members the fullness of being none of them can know in isolation, he pillories social sin as unwearyingly as individual sin. Every sin, in truth, is a social sin. 'We are all bound together—for mutual health or else for mutual misery.' No action that we take, or neglect, is without its social consequences, spreading out beyond our ken, but not beyond our responsibility, in ever-widening circles. Because, whether we see it or no, no one

MUSIC AND MORALS

of us can escape from responsibility, he admires those who, for good and evil, accept it; who do what they have to do, and make no pretences to themselves about it. He offends our squeamishness by the harsh honesty with which he reports, and even, in a sense, admires, Cromwell's ruthless doings in Ireland, and similar actions of Frederick of Prussia and others. Here he is not only justifying his hero: trying, with far less than strict rationality, to prove that all he does is right: he is, more justifiably, carrying out the view that facts have got to be faced.

He calls on us to make efforts. We grumble that we had rather be left in peace. He will not leave us in peace. He is the truceless foe of that ignorant and complacent darkness that pretends to be peace. He compels us to open our eyes and see it, and so much else, for what it is. His sense of the solidity of spiritual values, and of the immense significance of conduct, makes his thought a searchlight, that not only plays over the great spaces of public life and public duty, but penetrates into the most secret corners of an unworthy private life. Are we to refuse to see, because to see will make us uncomfortable? To allow him to attack Mammonism, which everyone condemns, and jib when he shows it to us in the villa, which nearly everyone desires? Are we sure that what

we dislike is not his showing us that we do desire the villa, and that it is as much of a sham, as much of an escape, as much of a sign of shameful 'ease in Zion,' as the palace; is, in truth, the palace in petto? We can, all of us, decry the Mammonism of others; Carlyle makes us see our own. And that is the real trouble. He aims at the true target, and few of his shots are wide. We feel and resent them. He wages war on the villa mind; on the whole snug conception of a compartmented society, in which the comfortable suburban can draw down his blinds against the crying of his brothers in the slums, on the one hand, and, on the other, condemn, while apeing, the vulgarities of the West End. He sees that villa among the high brows as well as among the low. To no one does he offer or promise comfort. It is not a state that he admires or finds compatible with the stern realities of life.

He knew right from wrong; but it is right, not wrong, that absorbs him. All his ultimate emphasis is on how to be right. It is this positive turn that makes him uniquely significant for a generation floundering, as does ours, in an uncharted sea of moral negatives. It is not here claimed that everything he said to be right is so; what is claimed is that a chart as clear, as firmly outlined, as his, can give us knowledge of where we are, and

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of the road we have to follow to get to where we want to be.

His own choice was definite and unambiguous. He knew where he stood and in what he believed, and he saw a hope that shone and sparkled. The hope, for him, is always there. His last word to the students at Edinburgh was Goethe's 'Wir heissen euch hoffen'—that favourite line of his, which, like so many lines he translated, gains force and fire from his rendering. 'Work and despair not'—that is his refrain.

The courage of decision is, in him, supported by the fortitude of endurance. Behind both is vision. Insight to see, courage to act, fortitude to stand and wait—these are the human qualities that set on his message the seal of which he spoke to Emerson—'the great soul of a man.'

When Walt Whitman, in America, read that Thomas Carlyle was dying, indeed, on the very night of his death, he went out and looked at the stars. In his *Specimen Days* he describes how every star hung 'dilated, more vitreous, nearer than usual. Not as in some clear nights when the larger stars entirely outshine the rest. Every little star or cluster just as distinctly visible, and just as nigh.' He goes on:

'While through the whole of this silent, inde-

THOMAS CARLYLE

scribable show, inclosing and bathing my whole receptivity, ran the thought of Carlyle dying. (To soothe and spiritualise, and, as far as may be, solve the mysteries of death and genius, consider them under the stars at midnight.)

‘And now that he has gone hence, can it be that Thomas Carlyle, soon to chemically dissolve in ashes and by winds, remains an identity still? In ways perhaps eluding all the statements, lore, and speculations of ten thousand years — eluding all possible statements to mortal senses — does he yet exist, a definite, vital being, a spirit, an individual — perhaps now wafted in space among those stellar systems, which, suggestive and limitless as they are, merely edge more limitless, far more suggestive systems? I have no doubt of it. In silence, of a fine night, such questions are answer’d to the soul.’

Judgment on the great can be passed only by their peers.

BOOKS RECOMMENDED

With due respect to the extensive literature *about* Carlyle, I would urge the reader, in the first instance, to confine himself to Carlyle's own words — first in his books, and then in his letters. For this purpose, he will turn either to the collected edition of *Carlyle's Works*, or to the various editions in which separate volumes have appeared, notably the 'Everyman' edition. For *Past and Present* and the *French Revolution*, this edition should certainly be consulted, in order to read the introduction by R. W. Emerson to the first, and by H. Belloc to the second.

Letters include *Early Letters of Carlyle*, *Correspondence with Goethe*, both edited by Charles Eliot Norton; *Love Letters of Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh*, edited by Alexander Carlyle; *Correspondence with Emerson*, edited by Charles Eliot Norton; *New Letters of Thomas Carlyle*, and *Letters of Carlyle to Mill, Sterling and Browning*, both edited by Alexander Carlyle. The series of volumes by David Alec Wilson is a precious mine of material. The very interesting *Conversations with Carlyle*, by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy and Mrs. Carlyle's *Letters* and *New Letters and Memorials* must certainly not be neglected.

Carlyle's *Journal* can only be read in Froude's biography (4 vols. 1884). It is much to be desired that it should be printed as a whole and independently.

PRINCIPAL DATES

- 1795 December 4, born at Ecclefechan.
1806 Jane Welsh born.
1809 Goes to Edinburgh University.
1814 Returns to Annan, as mathematical teacher.
1816 Goes to Kirkaldy, as mathematical teacher.
1819 Returns to Edinburgh.
1821 Meets Jane Welsh.
1824 Publishes translation of *Wilhelm Meister*.
Receives Letter from Goethe.
1825 Publishes *Life of Schiller*.
1826 Marries Jane Welsh.
1827 Publishes *German Romance*.
1828 Goes to live at Craigenputtock.
1832 Death of Father.
1834 Goes to live in London.
1835 Publishes *Sartor Resartus*.
1837 Publishes *French Revolution*.
1839 Publishes first collection of *Miscellaneous Essays*.
1840 Publishes *Chartism*.
1841 Publishes *Heroes and Hero Worship*.
1843 Publishes *Past and Present*.
1845 Publishes *Oliver Cromwell*.
1850 Publishes *Latter Day Pamphlets*.
1851 Publishes *Life of John Sterling*.
1854 Death of Mother.
1856 Publishes first volume of *Frederick*.
1865 Publishes last volume of *Frederick*.
1866 Inaugural Address as Rector of Edinburgh University.
Death of Jane Welsh Carlyle.
1867 Publishes *Shooting Niagara*.
1875 Publishes *Early Kings of Norway*, etc.
1881 February 5, dies.

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This powerful and moving story of life in a small Scots burgh is one of the grimmest studies of realism in all modern fiction. The author flashes a cold and remorseless searchlight upon the back-bittings, jealousies, and intrigues of the townsfolk, and his story stands as a classic antidote to the sentimentalism of the kailyard school.

DUNSTERVILLE, Major-General L. G.

STALKY'S REMINISCENCES

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'The real Stalky, General Dunsterville, who is so delightful a character that the fictitious Stalky must at times feel jealous of him as a rival. . . . In war he proved his genius in the Dunster Force adventure ; and in this book he shows that he possesses another kind of genius – the genius of comic self-revelation and burbling anecdote. And the whole story is told in a vein of comedy that would have done credit to Charles Lever.' *The Observer*

FARSON, Negley

SAILING ACROSS EUROPE. With an Introduction

by FRANK MORLEY

No. 111

A voyage of six months in a ship, its one and only cabin measuring 8 feet by 6 feet, up the Rhine, down the Danube, passing from one to the other by the half-forgotten Ludwig's Canal. To think of and plan such a journey was a fine imaginative effort and to write about it interestingly is no mean accomplishment.

FAUSSET, Hugh I'Anson

TENNYSON. A critical study

No. 124

Mr. Fausset's study of Tennyson's qualities as poet, man and moralist is by implication a study of some of the predominant characteristics of the Victorian age. His book, however, is as pictorial as it is critical, being woven, to quote *The Times*, 'like an arras of delicate colour and imagery.'

FLAUBERT, Gustave

MADAME BOVARY. Translated by ELEANOR MARX- AVELING. With an Introduction by HAMISH MILES

No. 144

' . . . It remains perpetually the novel of all novels which the criticism of fiction cannot overlook ; as soon as ever we speak of the principles of the art we must be prepared to engage with Flaubert. There is no such book as his *Bovary* ; for it is a novel in which the subject stands firm and clear, without the least shade of ambiguity to break the line which bounds it.' PERCY LUBBOCK
in The Craft of Fiction

FORMAN, Henry James

GRECIAN ITALY. A book of Travel

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'It has been said that if you were shown Taormina in a vision you would not believe it. If the reader has been in Grecian Italy before he reads this book, the magic of its pages will revive old memories and induce a severe attack of nostalgia.' *From the Preface* by H.

FESTING JONES

GARNETT, Edward

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GARNETT, Mrs. R. S.

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This book, though in form an historical novel, claims to rank as a psychological study. It is an attempt to depict a character which, though destitute of the common virtues of everyday life, is gifted with qualities that compel love and admiration.

GAUGIN, Paul

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VAN WYCK BROOKS

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The confessions of genius are usually startling; and Gaugin's *Journals*, now made accessible to the wider world, are no exception. He exults in his power to give free rein to his savage spirit, tearing the shawl from convention's shoulders with a gesture as unscrupulous as it is Rabelaisian.

GIBBS, J. Arthur

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GOBINEAU, Le Comte de

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The three stories included in this volume mark the flood tide of Comte de Gobineau's unique and long-neglected genius. Not even Nietzsche has surpassed him in a love of heroic characters and unfettered wills – or in his contempt for bourgeois virtues and vices.

GOSSE, Sir Edmund

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GRAHAM, Stephen

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In his own experiences as a soldier Stephen Graham has conserved the half-forgotten emotions of a nation in arms. Above all, he makes us feel the stark brutality and horror of actual war, the valour which is more than valour, and the disciplined endurance which is human and therefore the more terrifying.

HAMILTON, Mary Agnes

THOMAS CARLYLE

No. 157

Although not a formal biography, being more concerned with the mind of the man, as revealed in his writing, than with the external incidents of his life, it sets both Carlyle and Jane Welsh before the reader in an outline that, while it may provoke sharp disagreement, is alive and challenging.

HASTINGS, A. C. G.

NIGERIAN DAYS. With an Introduction by
R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM

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Written with great sincerity and with equal modesty, it is the record of eighteen long years spent on the confines of the Empire, a book devoid of bombast, and without the cheap expression of opinion of the average globe-trotter who in a month is competent to settle the 'native' question of a country that he has only seen as in a cinema.

HEARN, Lafcadio

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HEYWARD, Du Bose

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HUDSON, W. H.

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JONES, Henry Festing

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KALLAS, Aino

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LAWRENCE, A. W., edited by

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LAWRENCE, D. H.

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LESLIE, Shane

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LUBBOCK, Percy

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Times

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LYND, Robert

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MACDONALD, The Rt. Hon. J. Ramsay

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MACHEN, Arthur

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MAUGHAM, W. Somerset

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MAUGHAM, W. Somerset

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MENCKEN, H. L.

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MEREZHKOVSKY, Dmitri

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MEYNELL, Alice

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No. 133

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MILES, Hamish

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MITCHISON, Naomi

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MOORE, George

CONFESSIONS OF A YOUNG MAN

No. 76

'Mr. Moore, true to his period and to his genius, stripped himself of everything that might stand between him and the achievement of his artistic object. He does not ask you to admire this George Moore. He merely asks you to observe him beyond good and evil as a constant plucked from the bewildering flow of eternity.'
Humbert Wolfe

MORLEY, Christopher

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TOMLINSON

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MURRAY, D. L.

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No. 149

Mr. Murray's sub-acid Tory satisfaction enlivens the historical essays, his sanity and penetration make memorable the books he discusses, while the unfailing charm of his style suffuse the reader of his miscellaneous pieces with mood and sentiment such as might be evolved from the glow of candles upon crinolines. Those who enjoyed his *Disraeli* will here find more of the same magic in these papers, which were originally published under the title of *Scenes and Silhouettes*.

MURRAY, Max

THE WORLD'S BACK DOORS. Adventures. With an Introduction by HECTOR BOLITHO

No. 61

His journey round the world was begun with about enough money to buy one meal, and continued for 66,000 miles. There are periods as a longshore man and as a sailor, and a Chinese guard and a night watchman, and as a hobo.

MURRY, J. Middleton

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NICHOLS, Beverley

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in *The Sunday Times*

O'FLAHERTY, Liam

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O'NEILL, Eugene

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O'SHAUGHNESSY, Edith

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PATER, Walter

MARIUS THE EPICUREAN

No. 23

Walter Pater was at the same time a scholar of wide sympathies and a master of the English language. In this, his best-known work, he describes with rare delicacy of feeling and insight the religious and philosophic tendencies of the Roman Empire at the time of Antoninus Pius as they affected the mind and life of the story's hero.

PATER, Walter

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PICKTHALL, Marmaduke

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In *Oriental Encounters*, Mr. Pickthall relives his earlier manhood's discovery of Arabia and sympathetic encounters with the Eastern mind. He is one of the few travellers who really bridges the racial gulf.

POWELL, Sydney Walter

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Throwing up a position in the Civil Service in Natal because he preferred movement and freedom to monotony and security, the author started his wanderings by enlisting in an Indian Ambulance Corps in the South African War. Afterwards he wandered all over the world.

POWYS, Llewelyn

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Black Laughter is a kind of *Robinson Crusoe* of the continent of Africa. You actually share the sensations of a sensitive and artistic nature suddenly transplanted from a peaceful English village into the heart of Africa.

RANSOME, Arthur

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READE, Winwood

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H. G. WELLS in *An Outline of History*

REYNOLDS, Stephen

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RIESENBERG, Felix

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A collection of intimate character-portraits of men with whom the author has sailed on many voyages. The sequence of studies blends into a fascinating panorama of living characters.

ROBERTS, Captain George

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The Manner of his being taken by Three Pyrate Ships which, after having plundered him, and detained him 10 Days, put him aboard his own Sloop, without Provisions, Water, etc.

The Hardships he endur'd for above 20 Days, 'till he arriv'd at the Island of St. Nicholas, from whence he was blown off to Sea ; and after Four Days of Difficulty and Distress, was Shipwreck'd on the Unfrequented Island of St. John, where, after he had remained near two Years, he built a Vessel to bring himself off.

ROBINSON, James Harvey

THE MIND IN THE MAKING. An Essay

No. 9

‘For me, I think James Harvey Robinson is going to be almost as important as was Huxley in my adolescence, and William James in later years. It is a cardinal book. I question whether in the long run people may not come to it, as making a new initiative into the world’s thought and methods.’ *From the Introduction by*
H. G. WELLS

ROSEBERRY, The Earl of

NAPOLEON: THE LAST PHASE

No. 96

Of books and memoirs about Napoleon there is indeed no end, but of the veracious books such as this there are remarkably few. It aims to penetrate the deliberate darkness which surrounds the last act of the Napoleonic drama.

RUTHERFORD, Mark

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MARK RUTHERFORD.

With an Introduction by H. W. MASSINGHAM

No. 67

Because of its honesty, delicacy and simplicity of portraiture, this book has always had a curious grip upon the affections of its readers. An English Amiel, inheriting to his comfort an English Old Crome landscape, he freed and strengthened his own spirit as he will his reader’s.

THE DELIVERANCE

No. 68

Once read, Hale White [Mark Rutherford] is never forgotten. But he is not yet approached through the highways of English letters. To the lover of his work, nothing can be more attractive than the pure and serene atmosphere of thought in which his art moves.

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SHELVOCKE, Captain George

A PRIVATEER'S VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD.

With aspersions upon him by WILLIAM BETAGH. Edited by

A. W. LAWRENCE

No. 142

A book of 1726, well known as the source of the albatross incident and other passages in the 'Ancient Mariner'; it describes the exploits of a private ship of war on the coasts of South America, its wreck on the Crusoe island off Juan Fernandez, and the subsequent adventures of its company in various parts of the Pacific.

Few among the true stories of the sea can rival this in psychological interest, because of the diverse villainies of captain and crew. Shelvocke was arrested on his return to England, for a successful conspiracy to defraud his owners of their due percentage of the profits, and he then wrote his book to defend his conduct.

SITWELL, Constance

FLOWERS AND ELEPHANTS. With an Introduction

by E. M. FORSTER

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Mrs. Sitwell has known India well, and has filled her pages with many vivid little pictures, and with sounds and scents. But it is the thread on which her impressions are strung that is so fascinating, a thread so delicate and rare that the slightest clumsiness in definition would snap it.

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SYMONS, Arthur

PLAYS, ACTING AND MUSIC

No. 113

This book deals mainly with music and with the various arts of the stage. Mr. Arthur Symons shows how each art has its own laws, its own limits ; these it is the business of the critic jealously to distinguish. Yet in the study of art as art it should be his endeavour to master the universal science of beauty.

WILLIAM BLAKE. A critical study

No. 94

When Blake spoke the first word of the nineteenth century there was none to hear it ; and now that his message has penetrated the world, and is slowly remaking it, few are conscious of the man who first voiced it. This lack of knowledge is remedied in Mr. Symons's work.

TCHEKOFF, Anton

TWO PLAYS : *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Sea Gull*.

Translated by GEORGE CALDERON

No. 33

Tchekoff had that fine comedic spirit which relishes the incongruity between the actual disorder of the world with the underlying order. He habitually mingled tragedy (which is life seen close at hand) with comedy (which is life seen at a distance). His plays are tragedies with the texture of comedy.

THOMAS, Edward

A LITERARY PILGRIM IN ENGLAND

No. 95

A book about the homes and resorts of English writers, from John Aubrey, Cowper, Gilbert White, Cobbett, Wordsworth, Burns, Borrow and Lamb, to Swinburne, Stevenson, Meredith, W. H. Hudson and H. Belloc. Each chapter is a miniature biography and at the same time a picture of the man and his work and environment.

THE POCKET BOOK OF POEMS AND SONGS FOR THE OPEN AIR

No. 97

This anthology is meant to please those lovers of poetry and the country who like a book that can always lighten some of their burdens or give wings to their delight, whether in the open air by day, or under the roof at evening ; in it is gathered much of the finest English poetry.

TURGENEV, Ivan

FATHERS AND CHILDREN. Translated by CONSTANCE GARNETT

No. 83

'As a piece of art *Fathers and Children* is the most powerful of all Turgenev's works. The figure of Bazarov is not only the political centre of the book, but a figure in which the eternal tragedy of man's impotence and insignificance is realised in scenes of a most ironical human drama.' *Edward Garnett*

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No. 82

In his characters is something of the width and depth which so astounds us in the creations of Shakespeare. *On the Eve* is a quiet work, yet over which the growing consciousness of coming events casts its heavy shadow. Turgenev, even as he sketched the ripening love of a young girl, has made us feel the dawning aspirations of a nation.

SMOKE. Translated by CONSTANCE GARNETT

No. 84

In this novel Turgenev sees and reflects, even in the shifting phases of political life, that which is universal in human nature. His work is compassionate, beautiful, unique ; in the sight of his fellow-craftsmen always marvellous and often perfect.

VERGA, Giovanni

MASTRO-DON GESUALDO. A Novel. Translated

by D. H. LAWRENCE

No. 71

Verga, who died in 1922, is recognised as one of the greatest of Italian writers of fiction. He can claim a place beside Hardy and the Russians. 'It is a fine full tale, a fine full picture of life, with a bold beauty of its own which Mr. Lawrence must have relished greatly as he translated it.' *Observer*

VOIGT, F. A.

COMBED OUT

No. 122

This account of life in the army in 1917-18, both at home and in France, is written with a telling incisiveness. The author does not indulge in an unnecessary word, but packs in just the right details with an intensity of feeling that is infectious.

WATERS, W. G.

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No. 106

This anthology has been selected for publication in the Travellers' Library from among the many collections of verse because of its suitability for the traveller, particularly the summer and autumn traveller, who would like to carry with him some store of literary provender.

WELLS, H. G.

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'It is the richest, most generous and absorbing thing that Mr. Wells has given us for years and years.' *Daily News*

'I find this book as close to being magnificent as any book that I have ever read. It is full of inspiration and life.' *Daily Graphic*

WHARTON, Edith

IN MOROCCO

No. 41

Morocco is a land of mists and mysteries, of trailing silver veils through which minarets, mighty towers, hot palm groves and Atlas snows peer and disappear at the will of the Atlantic cloud-drifts.

ITALIAN BACKGROUNDS

No. 114

Mrs. Wharton's perception of beauty and her grace of writing are matters of general acceptance. Her book gives us pictures of mountains and rivers, monks, nuns and saints.

WITHERS, Percy

FRIENDS IN SOLITUDE. With an Introduction by

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

No. 131

Percy Withers, who lived for many years in the Lake Country, has his own experiences to relate ; but in seeking to widen them and to give them more vivid expression, he selects certain of the dale folk, his friends and companions, to tell in their own fashion so much the manner of men they are, so much of their life-story, of its prosperities, endurances, pathos, its reactions and responses to the outward circumstances as may make the picture more complete and give to it a more human significance.

YOUNG, E. H.

THE MISSES MALLETT. A Novel

No. 72

The virtue of this quiet and accomplished piece of writing lies in its quality and in its character-drawing ; to summarise it would be to give no idea of its charm. Neither realism nor romance, it is a book by a writer of insight and sensibility.

WILLIAM. A Novel

No. 27

'An extraordinary good book, penetrating and beautiful.' *Allan Monkhouse*

'All its characters are very real and alive, and William himself is a masterpiece.' *May Sinclair*

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